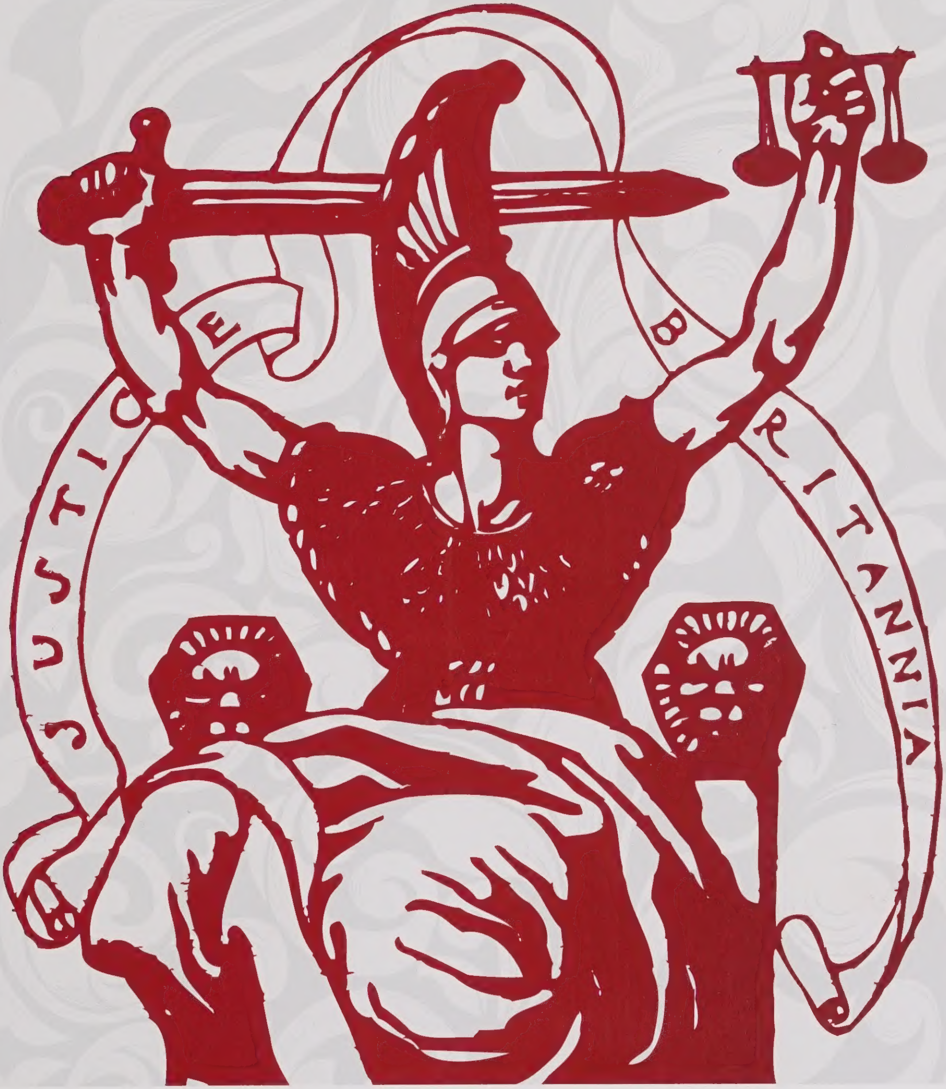
JUSTICE
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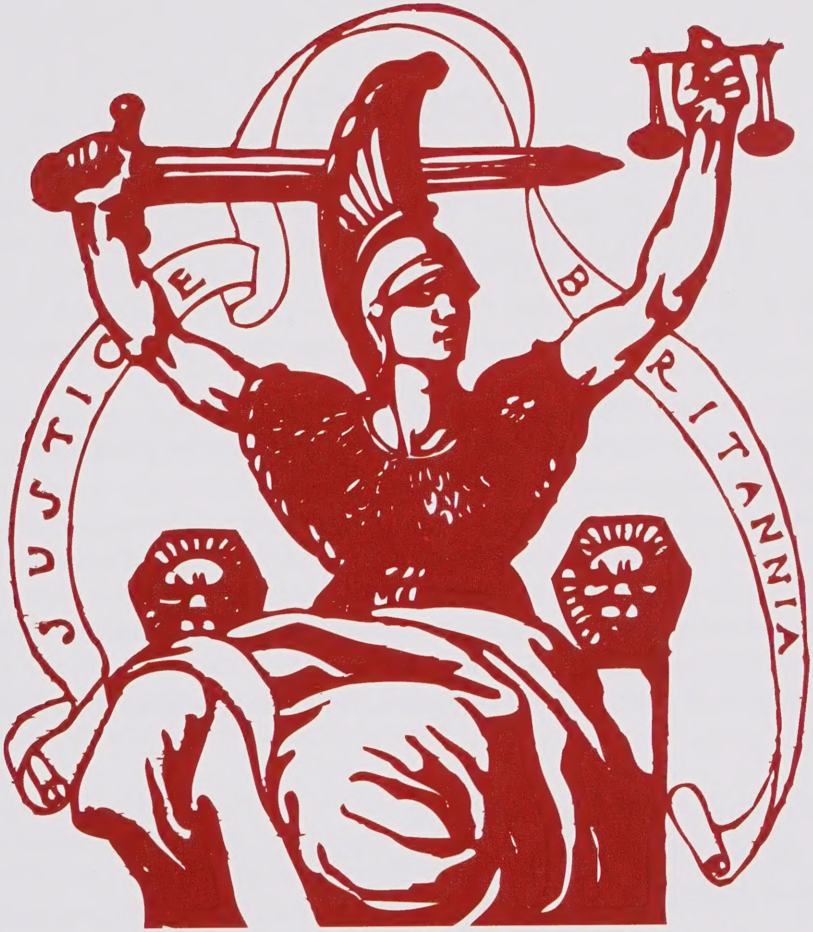
FIERCE IMAGININGS:

THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN TEXT AND IMAGE



FIERCE IMAGININGS:

THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN TEXT AND IMAGE

Exhibition & catalogue by Graham Bradshaw

Graham Bradshaw

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
University of Toronto

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Catalogue and exhibition by Graham Bradshaw
General editors P.J. Carefoote and Philip Oldfield
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Preface

Fierce Imaginings is the second of two exhibitions commemorating the First World War held at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library in 2014. The year began with *'We Will Do Our Share': The University of Toronto and the Great War*, a comprehensive overview of the role and impact of the war on the University and its faculty, staff, and students. The exhibition and accompanying catalogue documented the profound ways in which the entire institution was altered by the experience, to some extent paralleling how the country itself was forever changed by the war.

In this exhibition, Graham Bradshaw has taken a different approach, focussing closely on the power of the written word both to shape and reflect the individual experience of war. An immediate response to the outbreak of hostilities, akin to our social media postings, was the flood of poetry that appeared by both amateur and professional authors. Graham notes that in the first month of the war more than one hundred poems a day were received by *The Times* alone. The written word was immediately recognized as a potent tool in the war effort, and from the start authors knowingly assisted their governments in shaping public opinion. As early as September 1914 a secret meeting of twenty-five prominent British men of letters was convened to solicit their public support. The authors put themselves at the service of the newly created War Propaganda Bureau, as did the commercial publishers who issued their work.

Many of us are familiar with the writings of the disillusioned soldier poets who described the horror and senselessness of the war, particularly Wilfred Owen, but Graham explores the broader, deeper, and more diverse literary canon of which authors like Owen and Sassoon formed one part. Canadians too contributed their voices, from Robert Service and John McCrae of 'In Flanders Field' fame, to lesser known writers such as the chaplain F.G. Scott.

In spite of the wars that have taken place since 1918, the sheer horror and the suffering of the First World War continues to resonate with readers down to the present day. It is the individual voices, speaking to us eloquently and powerfully through poetry and prose, that continue to bring that experience home to us today.

Anne Dondertman
Director, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
September 2014

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Introduction

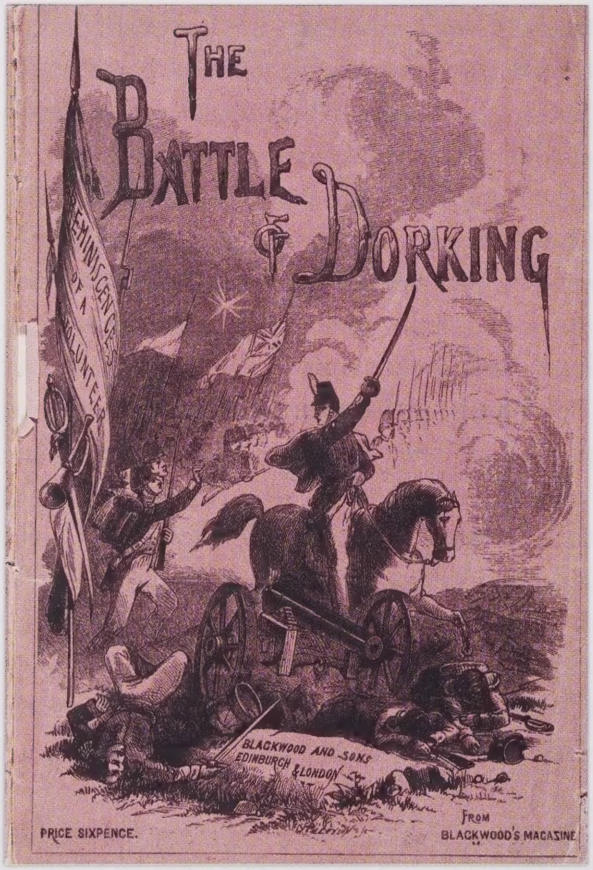
On 5 May 2011, almost ninety-three years after the First World War came to an end, the last person to have seen action in that horrific conflict passed away in Perth, Australia, just shy of his 111th birthday. Claude Choules, British by birth, was only fourteen when he lied about his age so that he could join the Royal Navy. Choules served as a boy seaman, first class, aboard the battleship *H.M.S. Revenge* and witnessed the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet. Canada's last surviving veteran was John Babcock, born near Kingston, Ontario. At fifteen he enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, and although under age, Babcock made it as far as England, where he spent the remainder of the war training with his fellow countrymen in the expectation that he would eventually be sent to the trenches on the Western Front. Babcock died in 2010 at the age of 109. The honour for being the last known person to have served in the Great War belongs to Florence Green, who died in 2012. She joined the Women's Royal Air Force in September 1918 when she was seventeen years old. With their deaths, the last of the many millions of men and women who wore the uniform of their country in that most bloody of wars had gone and an era had ended.

This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. Few could have foretold that the assassination by Serbian nationalists, in June 1914, of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, would trigger a series of events culminating less than five weeks later in war between the major powers of Europe. By the end of what had become a global conflict, over fifteen million military and civilian lives had been lost, four empires destroyed, and the maps of Europe and the Middle East redrawn. As the historian Margaret MacMillan has commented, the world still lives with its consequences, from the ethnic tensions in the Balkans to the conflicts that have plagued the Middle East for decades. How the First World War is remembered and understood today has been largely shaped by the literature and images left behind by those who lived, and in many cases died during those tumultuous years. The grim attrition of trench warfare in France and Belgium described in those works has come to dominate our imaginations, although the war was fought on many fronts including Italy, Russia, the Dardanelles, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Salonika, as well as on and under the sea and in the air. Our perception of that war has been particularly influenced by the poetry of men like Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and Isaac Rosenberg, and the fiction and prose writings of Erich Maria Remarque, Richard Aldington and Robert Graves, among others, all of whom served on the Western Front. These 'texts of disillusionment', which describe in unrelenting fashion the horror, slaughter, degradation and senselessness of the war, came to be accepted as the 'truth' for many. This perspective gained currency in the war books controversy of the late 1920s, when many of the anti-war publications with which we are most familiar first appeared. In her superb study on the First World War, Janet Watson characterized this controversy as a battle over representation and memory and a story of disillusionment created retrospectively (Watson, p. 2, 10). Another scholar has termed it a 'struggle between two contradictory strands of memory' (Vance, p. 22). Arrayed against the anti-war sentiments expressed by these ex-soldier authors were veterans and other critics who took exception to the deeply negative depiction of the conflict as devoid of any redeeming features, in their opinion placing far too much emphasis on the unrelieved suffering, the terrible squalor and the pointless sacrifice of the men in the trenches. By projection of these negative images, the memory of those who did not come back seemed to have been demeaned. While acknowledging that the war was a tragic event, writers such as Douglas Jerrold and Charles Carrington chose to stress the accomplishments of the men, their spirit, their humour, and most especially the comradeship of the trenches. Despite their best efforts to redress the balance and to offer a more nuanced, less emotionally charged view of the war, however, the 'realism' portrayed in the works of Remarque and other writers is what predominates to this day.

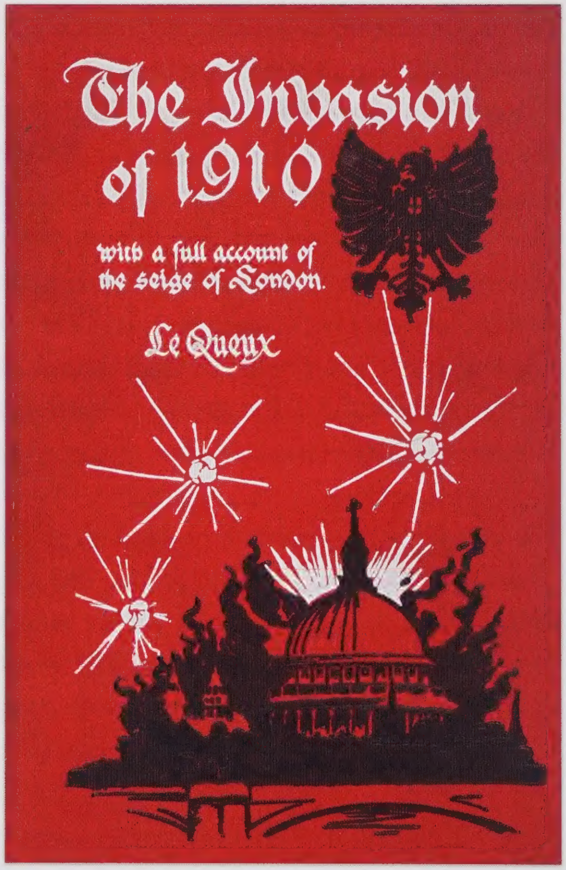
Fierce Imaginings: The First World War in Text and Image draws on material that has been published over the past century. While an attempt has been made to be broadly inclusive, the main focus is on the side of the Allies. The exhibition is divided into four sections: The Next Great War: Fiction and Fact; 1914-1918; Between the World Wars; and After 1945. The aim of the exhibition is to highlight some of the most important and interesting works of literature that have been written since the outbreak of war in 1914. From the very outset, political and military leaders in the belligerent nations understood the importance of generating information, controlling its distribution and shaping public opinion, both to maintain the morale of the civilian populations on the home front and to prosecute the war successfully. In Britain, government issued or sanctioned publications began appearing with increasing frequency. These publications extolled the fighting prowess and spirit of their troops, while denigrating the enemy and minimizing the military setbacks and harsh conditions with which the soldiers had to contend. With very few exceptions, the material in the 1914-1918 cases supports the standard version of the war, while the books published between the wars offer the two conflicting representations mentioned above. The final cases in the exhibition present a range of titles published since the end of the Second World War. These books illustrate how the Great War continues to resonate with new generations of writers, writers born decades after 1918 such as Pat Barker, Sebastian Faulks, Timothy Findley and Joseph Boyden. Taken as a whole, the works comprising the exhibition, albeit often far removed from one another in time and in the personal experience of the authors, illustrate the continuing importance and extraordinary influence of a war that was fought one hundred years ago.

The majority of the material on display comes from the collections of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library and from a private collection. The John W. Graham Library at Trinity College and the E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria University in the University of Toronto also graciously agreed to lend items. Thanks are due to those who have assisted in the preparation of this exhibition, including Paul Armstrong, Sharon Brown, Pearce Carefoote, Linda Corman, Anne Dondertman, Linda Joy, Lachlan McNair, Philip Oldfield, Lisa Sherlock, John Shoesmith and Deborah Whiteman.

The exhibition is dedicated to the men and women who served in the Great War, and to the memory of my great-grandfather, Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant James Ring of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, who fought on the Western Front and is buried with his comrades in a French cemetery. 'Faugh-a-Ballagh!'


THE BATTLE OF DORKING
REMINISCENCES OF A VOLUNTEER
BLACKWOOD AND SONS EDINBURGH & LONDON
PRICE SIXPENCE.
FROM BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE

Sir George Chesney. The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer.


The Invasion of 1910
with a full account of the seige of London.
Le Queux

William Le Queux. The Invasion of 1910: with a full account of the siege of London.

Case 1

THE NEXT GREAT WAR: FICTION AND FACT

1. Sir George Chesney (1830-1895). *The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer.* Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1871.

2. Philip Colomb (1831-1899). The Great War of 189- : A Forecast. London: W. Heinemann, 1893.

3. Erskine Childers (1870-1922). The Riddle of the Sands: A Record of Secret Service recently Achieved. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1903.

4. William Le Queux (1864-1927). The Invasion of 1910: with a full account of the siege of London. Toronto: Macmillan, 1906.

The decades immediately preceding the First World War in Europe were ones of growing international tensions, commercial and economic rivalries, competing territorial ambitions in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the negotiation of public and secret military alliances, and an intense military and naval arms race. The emergence of Germany as the dominant military force in Europe following its defeat of the French in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 had fundamentally shifted the balance of power on the Continent. This event sent shock waves throughout the various military establishments as they absorbed the lessons of the war's outcome and assessed the changing nature of warfare. The period also gave rise to a genre of popular literature, one 'dedicated to presenting partisan versions' of what the British termed 'The Next Great War' and the Germans called *der nächste Krieg* or *der Zukunftskrieg* (Clarke, ed., *The Tale of the Next Great War*, p. 1). Many of these stories were first serialized in the popular magazines and newspapers of the day, thus ensuring a broad readership. One authority estimates that in Britain alone more than sixty narratives describing invasion or the attempted invasion of the country were published between the years 1870 and 1914 (Eby, p. 11).

In May 1871, while the Franco-Prussian War was still going on, there appeared in issue no. 667 of the *Edinburgh Magazine* an anonymous short story, *The Battle of Dorking.* The work, a fictional tale of a successful German invasion of England, caused an immediate sensation among the British public. Seeking to capitalize on this interest, Blackwood, the publisher, quickly had it issued as a sixpenny pamphlet and within two months over 110,000 copies had been sold. Considerable demand also occurred on the Continent where it was translated into several languages shortly after the British edition appeared. The story was in fact written by a serving officer in the British Army, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir George Chesney, who wrote this cautionary tale as a warning to his countrymen against the complacency that he thought had developed concerning military matters, as well as an unwarranted overconfidence in the ability of the armed forces to defend the nation against external threats. He argued strongly for the expansion and reorganization of the army, and the introduction of conscription. Following the publication of *The Battle of Dorking*, the 'tale of the war-to-come', as I. F. Clarke refers to them, became the most popular means of predicting the possible course of future conflicts (Clarke, ed., *The Great War with Germany 1890-1914*, p. ix). The stories also offered opportunities for the writers to argue for increased military spending, and to promote particular agendas.

The Great War of 189- was first serialized in the illustrated weekly magazine *Black and White* and then published in revised book form in 1893. Written by Philip Colomb, a retired admiral turned naval historian and strategist, with the assistance of several military and political experts (Colonel J. F. Maurice, Captain F. N. Maude, Archibald Forbes and three others), it envisioned England fighting a war against France and Russia, two great powers whose imperial ambitions throughout the

1890s were clashing with those of the British. The work was not propaganda, but a 'considered, collective opinion of men, familiar with War Office and Admiralty thinking, who aimed to present as objective a forecast as lay in their powers' (Clarke, ed., *The Great War with Germany 1890-1914*, p. 29). In a scenario that eerily presages the First World War, the conflict begins after the attempted assassination of Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria. This event sets off a chain of events culminating in the outbreak of war between Germany and Austria-Hungary on the one hand, and France and Russia on the other. Britain initially remains neutral, but is drawn in to support the Germans. The inclusion of real political figures and the reproduction of telegrams, despatches from foreign correspondents and newspaper editorials give the book an air of authenticity.

By 1903, however, the international situation had changed dramatically from the British perspective. No longer was France considered a serious threat. The focus of concern had shifted to Germany, to its aggressive foreign policy, and to its pursuit of a large ocean-going navy, one seen as a direct challenge to Britain's control of the seas and thus to its very existence. Books and stories with the German menace as the central plot began to appear in increasing numbers throughout the decade. The most famous of these works was Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands*, a book that remains in print to this day. In this story two young Englishmen uncover a plan by Imperial Germany to launch an invasion fleet from an inhospitable section of the German coast, which is covered by an extensive network of sandbanks that ostensibly would prevent the passage of ships to the sea. The two men, Carruthers and Davies, learn that with the assistance of a British traitor, the Germans have discovered channels through these natural obstacles and have created a staging area for a flotilla of small sea-going lighters (ships) designed to carry troops. When escorted by larger naval warships, this fleet would descend upon the unsuspecting and unprepared British. As Carruthers comments, the invasion plan 'was of such a strange and unprecedented character; for orthodox invasions start from big ports and involve a fleet of ocean transports ... ' By solving the 'riddle of the sands', the unorthodox German plan was exposed and the British authorities alerted to the danger this area of coastline posed.

William Le Queux's *The Invasion of 1910* was an immensely popular novel about a German invasion; but unlike Childers's book, it depicts the Germans successfully landing a considerable army on the east coast of England. The journalist and prolific novelist (Le Queux's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* indicates he averaged over five novels a year) was a well-known figure in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain. His stories often appeared in publications owned by Alfred Harmsworth (1865-1922), later Lord Northcliffe, the newspaper proprietor who was an early supporter of the 'new journalism', which focused on making newspapers and magazines more visually attractive and the content more appealing to the working classes and female readers. Among the most popular of Le Queux's stories were the tales involving espionage or the looming threat of imminent invasion by Britain's enemies. In 1894 he published *The Great War in England in 1897*, in which the British fought French and Russian forces. This was followed by *The Invasion of 1910*, first published in March 1906 in Northcliffe's newspaper, the *Daily Mail*, and in book form shortly afterward. Le Queux wrote the book to draw the public's attention to the need to prepare militarily for the next war. He enlisted the aid of Field Marshal Earl Roberts, the country's foremost soldier and a strong proponent of conscription, and other recognized authorities, to advise him on the military portions of the text. The book went through many editions, was translated into twenty-seven languages, and eventually sold over one million copies worldwide. In an interesting twist, Le Queux agreed to a German edition, but to his consternation the publisher changed the ending so that the invasion was a complete success.

5. Friedrich von Bernhardi (1849-1930). *Germany and the Next War.* Translated by Allen H. Powles. Popular edition. Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, 1914.

6. Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930). *Great Britain and the Next War.* Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1914.

In the decade immediately before the war, popular literature in Britain, especially those works of fiction focusing on the German invasion threat, reflected an increasing unease among certain segments of society about German intentions and the potential for war among the great European powers. German policies, in particular the German government's support of the Boer cause prior to and during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), and the decision by Kaiser Wilhelm II to embark on a rapid expansion of his naval forces as outlined in the navy laws of 1898 and 1900, were seen by Britain as a provocative challenge to its empire, if not to its very existence. Certain publications by German writers and military commentators also appeared to confirm the view that Germany was hostile to Britain, and was bent on a war of aggression and territorial expansion. One of the best known of these works was published in 1911 by the outspoken German general and military writer, Friedrich von Bernhardi. *Deutschland und der nächste Krieg* (*Germany and the Next War*) was written in the wake of the Moroccan Agadir crisis, a humiliating diplomatic defeat for his country. In the book, Bernhardi reminds his German readers of their country's glorious history and the need to reawaken their warlike instincts to fulfill its destiny. Espousing a form of Social Darwinism as it applies to nations, he presents an argument in support of war as a necessary or acceptable method by which countries achieve greatness, a kind of survival of the fittest, stating that war 'is not merely a necessary element in the life of nations, but an indispensable factor of culture, in which a true civilized nation finds the highest expression of strength and vitality'. The chapter headings give a clear sense of the book's contents: 'The right to make war'; 'The duty to make war'; 'World power or downfall'. Near the end of the book Bernhardi addresses explicitly the threat he believes the close relationship between England and France poses for Germany. In no uncertain terms he argues that these powers are intent on hindering further expansion of Germany's power. Germany, in response, is obliged to engage in energetic warlike preparations by enlarging its army and accelerating its naval armaments.

The English edition of the book became a bestseller, and within three years went through several editions. It offered 'proof' to those British Germanophobes who viewed German ambitions and actions with increasing fear and suspicion. One Englishman who took note of its publication was

Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of the famous fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, and many other works of fiction and non-fiction. In an essay first published in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1913, Doyle's aim was to draw his fellow-countrymen's attention to the book's disturbing message. Before reading Bernhardi, Doyle had never seriously believed in the 'German menace', dismissing the notion that either country had cause to go to war, but a close examination of the text changed his mind. Quoting extensively from Bernhardi's work, Doyle persuasively countered the points raised by the German general. In his view war was not, in and of itself, a good thing, nor did Doyle believe an Anglo-German war was necessary. He did, however, consider that the danger of a German war was great, and that Britain was vulnerable to attack by one of the new weapons of war, the submarine. Doyle's solution was to build a channel tunnel connecting England with France, obviating the need to transport an expeditionary force by water, and also lessening the country's dependence on overseas food sources and other essential supplies brought by ship.

On display is the American edition, the only edition of the essay issued in book form.

1914-1918

Early War Poetry Anthologies

7. *Songs & Sonnets for England in War Time: Being a Collection of Lyrics by various Authors inspired by the Great War*. London: John Lane; Toronto: Bell and Cockburn, 1914.

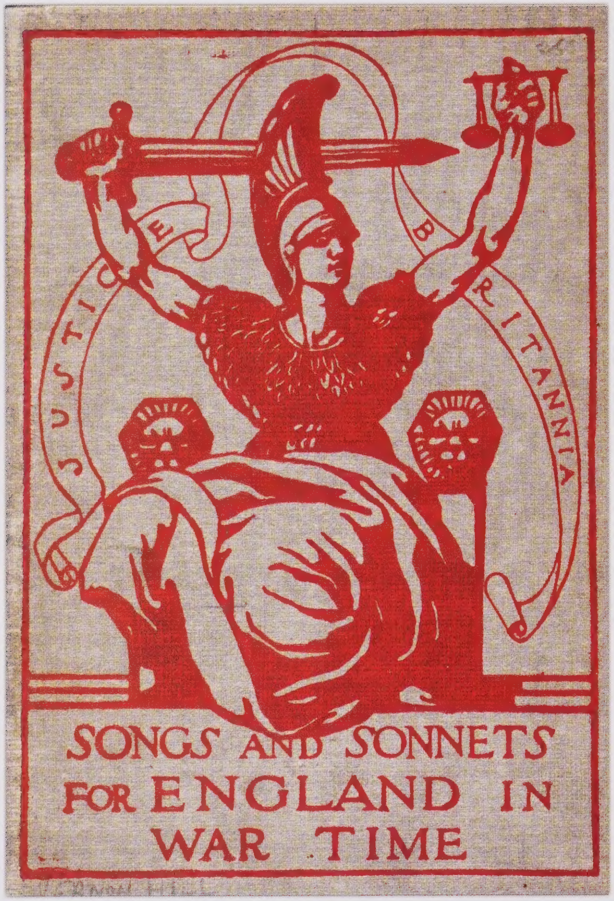
8. *Poems of the Great War, Published on Behalf of the Prince of Wales's National Relief Fund.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1914.

9. *Lest We Forget: A War Anthology*. Edited by H. B. Elliott. London: Jarrold & Sons, 1915.

10. *War Poems from The Times, August 1914-1915.* London: Printed and published for The Times Publishing Company, Ltd., by John Parkinson Bland, 1915.

11. Julian Grenfell (1888-1915). 'Into Battle'. London: Pelican Press, 1918.

In Britain the writing of poetry as an expression of unequivocal patriotism was an early and common response by civilians to the outbreak of war. Poems by well-established authors and by men and women with little or no literary pretensions began appearing soon after in newspapers and popular magazines. During the first month of the war *The Times* received more than one hundred war poems a day, and by the following August several thousand had been submitted (Hynes, p. 25-6). Many of the most prominent writers of the day, such as Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936), and Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), whose poems appear in each of the books on display in this section, were also asked to contribute to various anthologies. These early compilations were published in aid of the charitable and relief organizations that had been set up within weeks of the start of the war, to assist those dislocated by


JUSTICE
BRITANNIA
SONGS AND SONNETS FOR ENGLAND IN WAR TIME

Songs & Sonnets for England in War Time: Being a Collection of Lyrics by various Authors inspired by the Great War.

the fighting on the Continent, particularly the many Belgian refugees, and to offer tangible material support to the men at the front. An appeal by Edward, the Prince of Wales, printed in the 7 August 1914 issue of *The Times*, inaugurated a national relief fund to raise money to help both civilians and the families of soldiers and sailors experiencing hardship. John Lane, the publisher of *Songs & Sonnets for England in War Time*, claimed that this work was the first of its kind to appear during the war. The profits from the sale of the book were to be donated to the Prince of Wales's National Relief Fund. As stated on the back cover, 'Every purchaser of this book is, in a real sense, a subscriber to the Fund, but his duty does not end there. Let him make it his business to see that at least twelve of his friends buy the book too. That would be really *doing something!*' Likewise, the entire profits from the sale of *Poems of the Great War* were earmarked for the Fund. Other organizations also received financial assistance from the sales of poetry books. *Lest We Forget: A War Anthology* was published to aid the Queen Mary Needlework Guild, a charity supporting women who were making warm clothing for the men at the front. The book contained four patriotic-themed illustrations, with titles like 'Unconquerable', taken from the pages of *Punch* and drawn by Bernard Partridge (1861-1945), the well-known artist and long-time contributor to that magazine. *War Poems from The Times*, a sixteen-page supplement to the 9 August 1915 issue of *The Times* newspaper, follows the pattern of similar anthologies by reprinting poems from established writers, but interestingly includes contributions from two serving officers, Robert Nichols (1893-1944) and Julian Grenfell. Grenfell's poem, 'Into Battle', was written in April 1915 while he was at the front, and appeared the following month in *The Times*, the day after he succumbed to wounds suffered at the Second Battle of Ypres. 'Into Battle' would become one of the most popular and reproduced poems of the war.

War Poetry by Civilians

12. Thomas Hardy (1840-1928). *Song of the Soldiers.* Hove [Eng.]: [s.n.], 1914.

13. Harold Begbie (1871-1929). *Fighting Lines and Various Reinforcements.* London: Constable, 1914.

14. Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939). *Antwerp.* London: Poetry Bookshop, [1915].

15. Herbert Kaufman (1878-1947). *The Song of the Guns.* London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1914.

Thomas Hardy viewed the idea of war with hostility and was suspicious of the 'narrowly nationalistic' patriotism of his fellow countrymen, and of the extent to which Britain's imperialist policies might have contributed to the political crisis in Europe in August 1914 (Millgate, p. 461). He, like so many others, however, was persuaded that the invasion of Belgium had left Britain with little choice but to intervene in the conflict. Hardy was invited to and did attend with fellow authors a meeting convened by the government to discuss ways in which they might assist in the war effort. A declaration by prominent authors defending the British decision to go to war was reported in the 18 September 1914 issue of the *New York Times*, and Hardy's name appeared along with fifty-two others, including J. M. Barrie (1860-1937), Robert Bridges (1844-1930), John Galsworthy (1867-1933), Rudyard Kipling and H. G. Wells (1866-1946). The writers were in agreement that 'Great Britain could not without dishonour have refused to take part in the present war.' The full text of the authors' manifesto was reprinted the following month in the same newspaper, complete with their signatures in facsimile. Apart from this public statement and a few poems, Hardy's involvement in support of the war, unlike that of many other writers, was relatively slight. The poem 'Song of the Soldiers' was published on 9 September 1914 in *The Times*, and was subsequently widely reprinted; for example in a privately printed leaflet by E. Williams, an antiquarian bookseller in Hove, near Brighton (Purdy, p. 158). The title of the poem was altered by Hardy later that year to 'Men Who March Away', and it was collected in his book *Satires of Circumstance*.

The author and journalist Harold Begbie published a number of patriotic poems and articles. The poem 'Fall In', which appears in *Fighting Lines*, was used extensively in various recruiting campaigns that took place in Britain in 1914 and 1915. The last stanza of the poem illustrates the style and sentiments of Begbie's work:

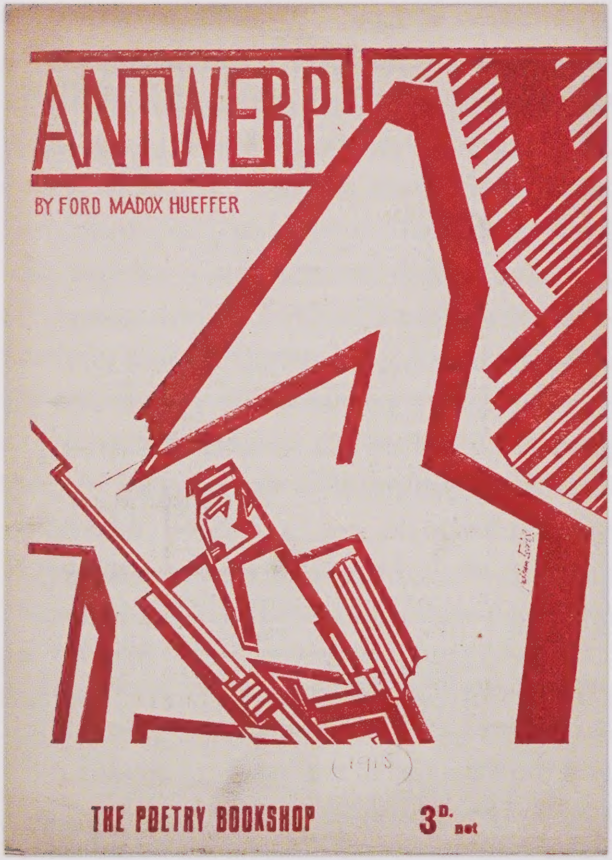
Why do they call, sonny, why do they call
  For men who are brave and strong?
Is it naught to you if your country fall,
  And Right is smashed by Wrong?
Is it football still and the picture show,
  The pub and the betting odds,
When your brothers stand to the tyrant's blow
  And Britain's call is God's?

Playing on the reader's love of his country, equating Britain's call to God's and using shame as a device to encourage young able-bodied men to join up, Begbie's work was typical of the poetry written at this stage of the war. The technique of shaming young men into enlisting was often found in the propaganda of the day, perhaps most famously in the recruiting poster of a young girl sitting on the lap of her father and asking 'What did you do in the war, Daddy?'

During his lifetime, Ford Madox Ford published eighty-one books, most notably the novel *The Good Soldier*, and over four hundred articles (Judd, p. 3). Born in England a few years after his German father immigrated to the country, Ford would write under the family name, Hueffer, until 1919. As had occurred elsewhere in the belligerent nations, war hysteria gripped certain segments of the population in 1914, manifesting itself in a heightened atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust, particularly of outsiders and those who appeared to be of German ancestry. Because of his surname, Ford was, during those first days of the war, insulted in the street and placed under the suspicion of the police. He would stubbornly retain the Hueffer surname until the war ended and he tired of the negative reactions to its Teutonic origins.

In early 1915, Ford published the poem 'Antwerp' after seeing Belgian refugees on the streets of London. He later acknowledged that the poem was circulated as official propaganda by the British government (Harvey, p. 43-4). While pleased to assist the war effort in this way, Ford decided at the end of July 1915 that he needed to do more. At age forty-one he accepted a commission in the Welch Regiment, although he was not posted to France until the summer of 1916. His front-line service was short; within weeks of his arrival Ford suffered a concussion when a German artillery shell exploded close by him. Diagnosed with shell shock and suffering from memory loss, he was invalided home where he spent the rest of the war. The aftereffects of these injuries would continue to plague him for several years. It was not until 1923 that Ford felt he had fully recovered.

The cover design, of a stylized soldier with a rifle, is by the Vorticist artist and writer, Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957).



Ford Madox Ford. Antwerp.

The three writers discussed above were English. Herbert Kaufman has the distinction of being an American, but like the others, he too was a professional writer. During the war many of his articles and editorials appeared in leading British newspapers and magazines. In 1914 Kaufman also published a small book of poetry *The Song of the Guns*, re-issued the following year in hard cover under the title *The Hell-gate of Soissons, and Other Poems*. The twenty-two poems in the collection convey the author's high regard and sympathy for England in her struggle against an unscrupulous enemy, and show a corresponding belief in the justice of the Allied cause and in ultimate victory. With titles such as 'The Hour of Valour', 'We Draw the Sword', 'Mother Britain and Her Sons', and 'Wilhelm the Mongol', one is left in no doubt of Kaufman's views.

Case 2

Propaganda: The War of Words

16. Committee on Alleged German Outrages. *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages ...* Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1916. 2 volumes.

On 15 December 1914 the British prime minister, H. H. Asquith (1852-1928), established a committee to investigate alleged acts of brutality committed by the German military against the civilian population in the parts of Belgium they had occupied. The committee was headed by James Bryce, 1st Viscount Bryce (1838-1922), a distinguished academic, jurist, and former ambassador to the United States. Over the next several months the committee members gathered evidence and heard from many Belgian refugees who had purportedly witnessed acts of terror and extreme violence. In a damning conclusion, the committee found that 'murder, lust, and pillage prevailed over many parts of Belgium on a scale unparalleled in any war between civilised nations during the last three centuries'. The first of the two volumes is the committee report; the second and much larger volume reprints the depositions of the witnesses, who in this published form are identified in the broadest terms, e.g. Belgian refugee, cook, married woman, professor. The Bryce Report received wide distribution and had a strong impact on American public opinion. The committee's findings, however, have been harshly criticized by scholars for 'falling well short of the standards of an impartial legal investigation and contributing to the distorted propaganda on "German atrocities" ... ' (Horne and Kramer, p. 232). Peter Buitenhuis goes further by arguing the report was 'largely a tissue of invention, unsubstantiated observations by unnamed witnesses, and second-hand eyewitness reports, depending far more on imagination than any other factor' (Buitenhuis, p. 27).

17. René Chambry. *The Truth about Louvain.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915.

18. *The Death of Edith Cavell.* London and Manchester: The Daily News & Leader, [1915?].

19. Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975). *The German Terror in France: An Historical Record.* New York: George H. Doran, 1917.

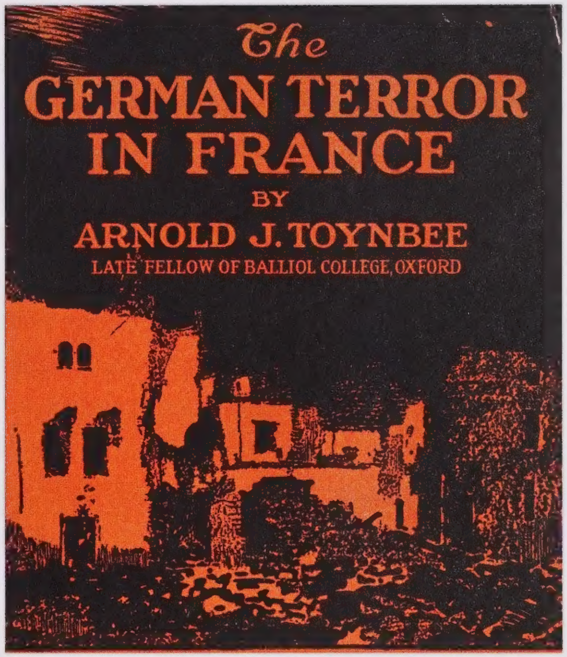
Although the evidence submitted to the Bryce committee and its summary findings must be viewed with great caution, the case against the German military's policy of deliberately targeting civilian populations remains a damning one. Their acts of brutality badly damaged the German government's efforts to present itself in a more favourable light and adversely affected its campaign to influence American public opinion. The publication of its own report, the German White Book, in which Belgian civilians were accused of heinous crimes against German soldiers, did little to change perceptions. The British propaganda machine made full use of the Bryce Report and other 'official' documents by sponsoring countless articles and books that described in lurid detail death and destruction at the hands of the Germans, and distributing the titles to America and other sympathetic countries. The deliberate burning, on the evening of 25 August 1914, of the library of the Catholic University of Louvain and the loss of over 200,000 medieval manuscripts and early printed books was a particularly barbaric and inexcusable act. Only a few days previous to the destruction of the library, hundreds of civilians in the area of the small Belgian town of Dinant had been executed in retaliation for alleged acts of resistance to the Germans. The execution of the British nurse, Edith Cavell (1865-1915), for concealing French and English soldiers in her house and assisting them to escape to neutral Holland, further hardened opinion against Germany.

Accusations of brutality were not restricted to German conduct in Belgium. France, too, saw its share of atrocities, and the French government responded with its own commissions to investigate and record these crimes against humanity. Arnold Toynbee, a historian who was engaged in government propaganda work and served in the intelligence department of the British Foreign Office, wrote *The German Terror in France* as the continuation of a previous study he had written on German outrages in Belgium. Basing his examination almost exclusively on the official documents from French, British, and Belgian sources, Toynbee skilfully set out a strong and detailed case against Germany.

20. Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936). *France at War: On the Frontier of Civilization.* New York: Doubleday, Page, 1915.

21. Rudyard Kipling. *For All We Have & Are.* London: Methuen, [1914].

22. Gilbert Parker (1862-1932). *The World in Crucible: An Account of the Origins & Conduct of the Great War.* Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, 1915.



Arnold Toynbee. The German Terror in France: An Historical Record.

At the beginning of September 1914, twenty-five prominent British men of letters attended a secret meeting at Wellington House in London, at the behest of C. F. G. Masterman (1873-1927), the head of the government's recently created War Propaganda Bureau. Present were some of the most well-respected and popular writers of the day, including Arnold Bennett (1867-1931), G. K. Chesterton, Arthur Conan Doyle, John Masefield (1878-1967), and Sir Gilbert Parker. They were brought together to discuss ways in which their fame and skills as writers could be employed in support of the Allied war effort. All agreed to help in any way they could. In most instances this assistance took the form of writing propaganda pieces - articles, essays, books - using commercial publishing houses to distribute their work to disguise the true purpose of the material (Buitenhuis, p. 15-16). Their writings were aimed not only at the British public, but also at neutral America, in an attempt to persuade that country of the justice of the war against Imperial Germany. Many of the publications thus issued found American publishers as well.

Although Rudyard Kipling could not attend the meeting of writers convened by Masterman, he did offer his considerable talents to the government. He visited the troops in their camps, including Canadian soldiers stationed at Salisbury, made recruiting speeches, and contributed a number of patriotic poems, perhaps most famously 'For All We Have and Are', which appeared in *The Times*. He also wrote numerous newspaper articles, short stories and full-length books, all in an effort to bolster the Allied cause. In August 1915, Kipling went to the French-controlled section of the front to gather material for a series of articles, entitled *France at War*, for the *Daily Telegraph*. These articles were collected together, under the same title, and published in book form. After meeting with high-ranking French politicians in Paris, Kipling travelled first to the city of Soissons to see its cathedral, badly damaged by German shelling. He was then taken on a tour of the French lines in Alsace, entering the trenches to observe through loopholes in the parapets, the German positions which were only a few metres away across No Man's Land. Kipling wrote approvingly of the French soldier, but reserved special praise for the women of France, noting that they 'work stride for stride with the men, with hearts as resolute and a spirit that has little mercy for shortcomings'.

The Canadian-born novelist, Sir Gilbert Parker, had made England his home in 1890. When war broke out, Masterman, conscious of the need to counter German propaganda in the United States, suggested Parker as the most suitable person to take charge of British propaganda activities in that country. In his role as the head of 'American publicity' (the term was his), Parker engaged in a subtle, skilful, and successful campaign to shape U.S. public opinion. One method he employed was to send influential Americans selected publications originating from the Wellington House authors, enclosing a specially-written letter from him. This created the fiction that this act was simply a gesture from a friendly Englishman (Adams, p. 164). Parker also contributed various articles and books to the cause, including *The World in Crucible*, which was published in 1915. Approximately half of the book offered a detailed analysis of the origins of the war and the events leading up to it. The rest was devoted to the war itself. In the penultimate chapter, Parker described in some detail the German 'doctrine of frightfulness'. The atrocities committed by German troops in those parts of occupied Belgium and France – the use of civilians as shields, the killing of wounded Allied soldiers, the bombardment of open towns – were just a few of the examples cited.

Propaganda: The War of Images

23. Louis Raemaekers (1869-1956). *Raemaekers Cartoons* [cover title]. London; Toronto: Hodder & Stoughton, [1916].

24. W. Heath Robinson (1872-1944). *Some 'Frightful' War Pictures.* London: Duckworth, 1915.

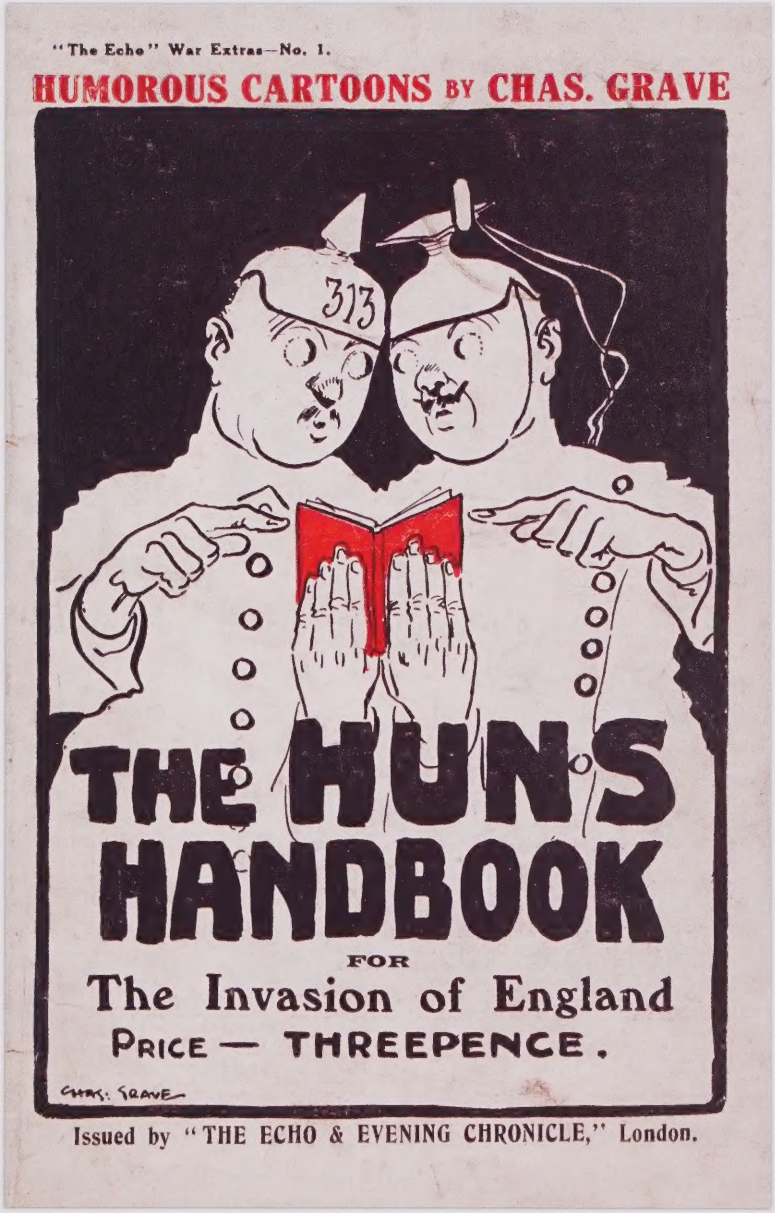
25. *The Huns' Handbook for the Invasion of England.* London: 'The Echo & Evening Chronicle', 1915.

The use of images in the propaganda campaign was an effective tool by which the belligerent nations shaped public opinion and maintained the morale of their civilian populations in what was becoming an unexpectedly long and increasingly costly conflict. The authorities on both sides came to recognize very quickly the crucial role the attitudes of their citizens would play in the successful prosecution of the war. As predictions of a victory by Christmas proved to be illusory, the British government began a campaign to encourage young men to enlist in the rapidly expanding armed forces. Recruiting posters, with eye-catching images and pithy slogans appealing to young men's patriotism, sense of duty and honour, were produced in large numbers and distributed throughout the country. The ubiquitous image of Field Marshal Earl Kitchener (1850-1916), the Secretary of State for War, pointing directly at the viewer and proclaiming 'Your country needs you', remains one of the most memorable of the First World War.

The violation of Belgian neutrality and stories of German atrocities emanating from the occupied territories were a gift to the propagandists. Caricatures of Prussian militarism and German brutality were commonly found on posters and in the illustrations appearing within the pages of the popular press. The images depicting the vilification and demonization of Germans, particularly Kaiser Wilhelm II, often shown in the company of the devil, and the association of German soldiers with the 'Hun', fuelled the growing virulent anti-German sentiment in large segments of the British public (Welch, p. 38). Artists such as Will Dyson (1880-1938), Bernard Partridge and Louis Raemaekers contributed many of those images. Raemaekers, the Dutch artist and cartoonist who worked for the newspaper *De Telegraaf*, had been appalled by German behaviour in Belgium. His powerful cartoons illustrating these abuses attracted the attention of the British authorities who re-published his work in affordable paper-covered editions. They also appeared in American editions.

Not all of the images were of a completely serious nature. Humour and ridicule were often used in cartoons to portray Germans in unflattering ways. Many cartoons and illustrations were aimed at deflating the vain and pompous Junkers officer class by exaggerating their physical characteristics, and their over-fondness for uniforms and military accoutrements. William Heath Robinson offered a hilarious and highly individual perspective of the war and the enemy. His drawings of complex, fantastical contraptions designed to confound the enemy's weapons, such as 'The screw-stopperer for plugging the muzzles of the enemy's rifles', or 'The blow-bomb for extinguishing the fuses of Zeppelin bombs', were imaginative and extremely funny. Robinson was also not averse to skewering British troops when the opportunity arose. The illustrations in *Some 'Frightful' War Pictures* were selected from *The Sketch* and the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, two publications to which he regularly contributed.

Purporting to be a translation of a guidebook meant for use in England and found on a captured German soldier, *The Huns' Handbook* is an odd mixture of the humorous and the serious. The text, interspersed with cartoons of corpulent and rather dim-witted German soldiers by Charles Grave (1886-1944), a regular contributor to *Punch* and other popular magazines, provided English translations of phrases to be used when encountering English civilians. Several pages reproduced badges of rank worn on the arms and shoulders of British officers and non-commissioned officers so that German spies could identify and if necessary


"The Echo" War Extras—No. 1.
HUMOROUS CARTOONS BY CHAS. GRAVE
313
THE HUNS HANDBOOK
FOR
The Invasion of England
PRICE — THREEPENCE.
CHAS. GRAVE
Issued by "THE ECHO & EVENING CHRONICLE," London.

The Huns' Handbook for the Invasion of England.

impersonate them. This title is reminiscent of those pre-war publications anticipating invasion by the forces of Imperial Germany.

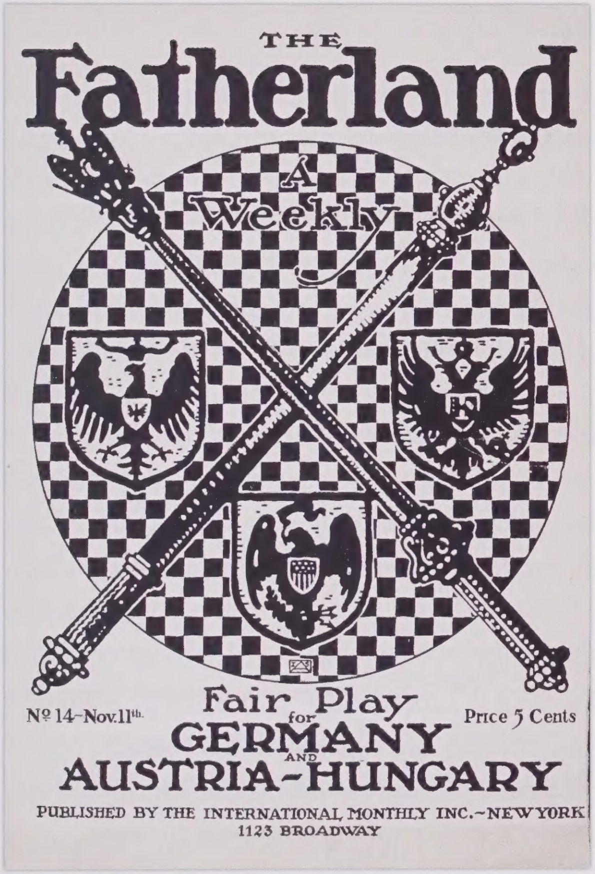
German-American Response

26. *The Fatherland.* Vol. 1, no. 14 (11 November 1914). New York: Published by the International Monthly Inc., 1914.

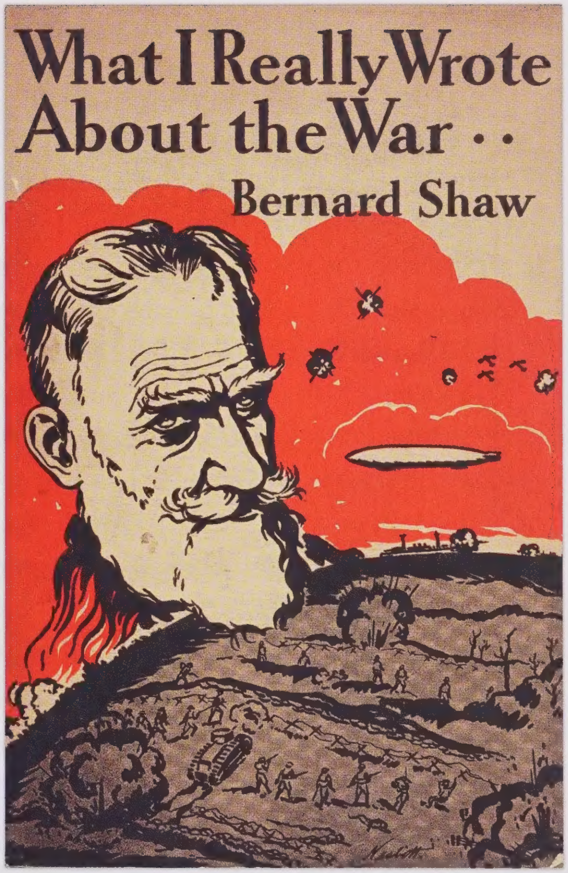
27. *Deutsch-Amerika.* Vol. 3, no. 6 (10 February 1917). Rochester, N.Y.: Rochester German Publishing Co., 1917.

According to the 1910 U.S. census, over eight million people out of a total national population of just under ninety-two million identified themselves as either first- or second-generation Germans (Luebke, p. 29-30). As one would expect to find in any large ethnic group, a wide diversity of opinions and attitudes existed. The vast majority of German-Americans were loyal to their new country and its democratic ideals, although many, quite naturally, retained strong emotional ties to the German language and to German culture. When war broke out in 1914, German-American newspapers denounced the anti-German tone of much of the reporting that appeared in the American print media, and countered this by presenting a more balanced or nuanced perspective. Some, however, took a decidedly pro-German stance and accepted uncritically protestations of innocence from the German government. One such publication was *The Fatherland*, an English-language weekly periodical, founded in August 1914 by the poet and writer George Sylvester Viereck (1894-1962). Viereck 'became the best known defender of Germany in 1914', and the paper reflected the owner and editor's strident brand of German chauvinism (Luebke, p. 91). Within two months, circulation had reached 100,000.

Deutsch-Amerika was an illustrated German-language weekly periodical published in Rochester, New York. First appearing in 1915, each issue contained short articles on the progress of the war


THE
Fatherland
A
Weekly
Nº 14–Nov.11th
Fair Play
for
GERMANY
AND
AUSTRIA–HUNGARY
Price 5 Cents
PUBLISHED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY INC.–NEW YORK
1123 BROADWAY

The Fatherland. Vol. 1, no. 14 (11 November 1914).


What I Really Wrote
About the War . .
Bernard Shaw

George Bernard Shaw. What I Really Wrote About the War.

from the German perspective. The issues also included articles of general interest to the German-American community, such as notes on important Germans living in the United States, home decor and women's fashion. Surprisingly, while the text was in German, the captions accompanying the numerous photographs were also translated into English.

Voices of Dissent

28. George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950). *Common Sense About the War.* London: Statesman Pub. Co., [1914].

29. George Bernard Shaw. *What I Really Wrote About the War.* New York: Brentano's, 1932.

30. Bertrand Russell (1872-1970). *Justice in War-time.* Manchester; London: The National Labour Press, [1915].

31. Clifford Allen (1889-1939). *Conscription and Conscience.* London: [No-Conscription Fellowship, 1915].

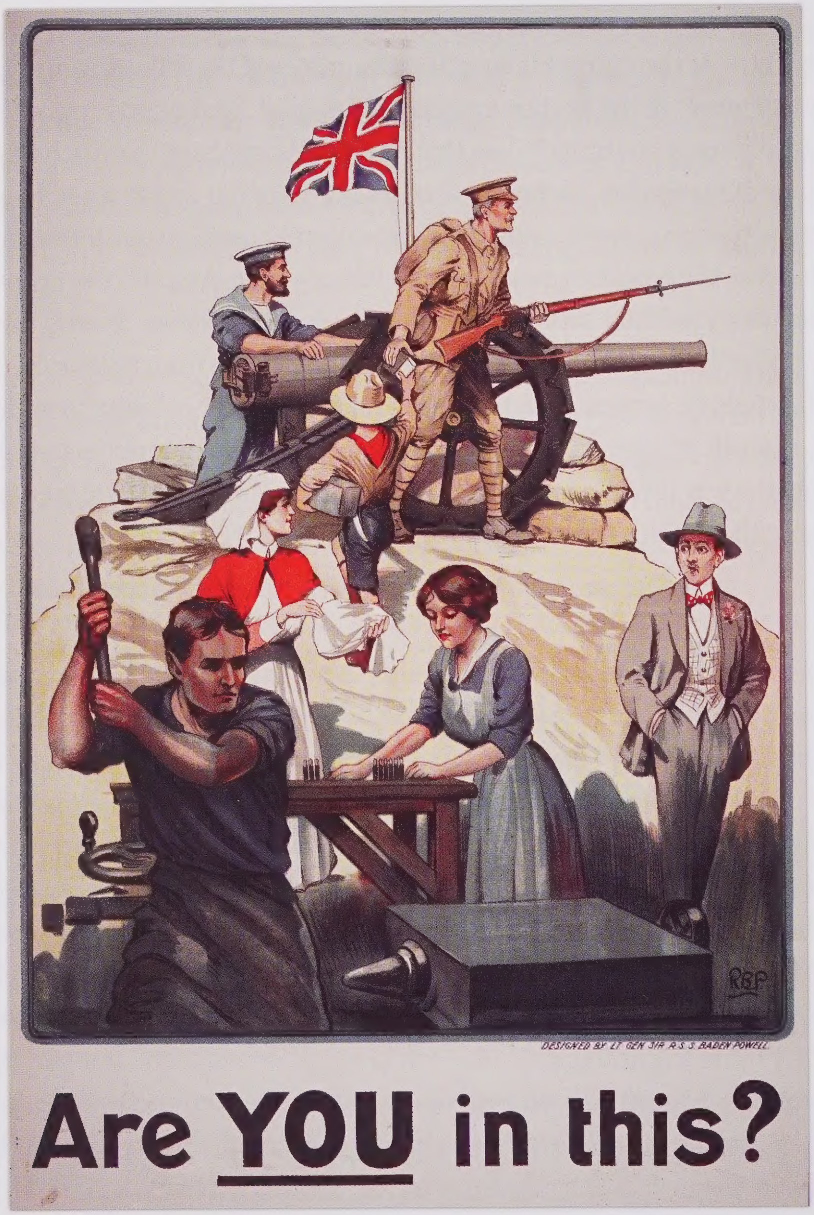
Support for the war in Britain was not greeted with universal approbation. Within the governing Liberal Party, there was considerable discussion about Britain's participation in a European conflict as the crisis on the Continent unfolded. Two Liberal cabinet ministers, John Morley (1838-1923) and John Burns (1858-1943), and the parliamentary secretary of the Board of Education, Charles Trevelyan (1870-1958), ultimately resigned their government posts in protest over the British decision to intervene on the side of France and Russia in the war against Germany. The Labour Party also had to contend with a strong and vocal anti-war group within the socialist ranks of the party. Organizations opposed to the war quickly began to appear. The Union for Democratic Control, a coalition of critics of the war from both political parties, campaigned for an early negotiated peace settlement and against the imposition of conscription (Boulton, p. 50). In December 1914, various Christian pacifist movements formed the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which was dedicated to the promotion of peace and to the assistance of those who, on moral or religious grounds, stood against compulsory military service.

Neither were British writers united in support of their country's entry into the war. The playwright George Bernard Shaw was a vocal critic of the British government's actions, reserving his most scathing comments for the Foreign Office, which he called 'a Junkers Club', and for its political head, Sir Edward Grey (1862-1933). Shaw, a long-standing member of the Fabian Society, a middle-class socialist organization, was deeply disturbed by the jingoistic and bellicose nature of much of the response to the war from the British press and the general public. On 14 November 1914, he published an anti-war manifesto, *Common Sense About the War*, as a special supplement to the *New Statesman*, the left-leaning magazine founded by Sidney Webb (1859-1947) and Beatrice Webb (1858-1943). The essay also appeared in the *New York Times.* Deliberately provocative, Shaw took exception to the notion of balance of power diplomacy, and held England equally responsible for the war, accusing the government of consciously and deliberately pursuing a foreign policy that would end in war. As he colourfully expressed it, 'The war is a failure for secret Junker diplomacy, ours no less than the enemy's.' One of the more famous comments in the essay stated that 'the heroic remedy for this tragic misunderstanding is that both armies should shoot their officers and go home'. Reaction to Shaw's words was swift and predictable: accusations of a pro-German bias, and worse, were common. After the war Shaw collected a number of his important essays together in one volume entitled *What I Really Wrote About the War*; it included *Common Sense.*

Intellectuals like Bertrand Russell had deep misgivings about war. According to Russell's biographer, Ronald Clark, Russell did not think all wars were unjustified; but in this particular instance, believed Britain's interests would have been better served had she remained neutral (Clark, p. 244). Russell was a founding member of the Union of Democratic Control, and in 1915 began working on behalf of the No-Conscription Fellowship. Russell was to suffer personally for his opposition to conscription and for his defence of conscientious objectors. He lost his lectureship at Trinity College, Cambridge, after being prosecuted, found guilty and fined for authoring a leaflet the authorities deemed had contravened the Defence of the Realm Act. In 1918 Russell was sentenced to six months in prison for 'having in a printed publication made certain statements likely to prejudice His Majesty's relations with the United States of America'. In neither instance was the sentence justified. The government's actions were unnecessarily harsh, but indicative of the increasingly hard line the authorities were taking in dealing with those who did not agree with official policy.

Justice in War-time is a collection of essays previously published in magazines. The first essay in the book, 'An appeal to the intellectuals of Europe', predated the release of the 1915 Bryce Report. While acknowledging that German atrocities had occurred, Russell argued that they were far less numerous than reported and less 'unnatural' than described. He also touched on a crucial point in the preface to the book by pointing out that, in some instances, the evidence presented before the Bryce Committee would not have been accepted in a criminal prosecution.

The year 1915 had been a disastrous one for Britain's military forces, which had fought a series of unsuccessful and extremely costly battles at Neuve Chapelle, Ypres, Festubert, Gallipoli, and Loos. Casualties had been high, and the demand to replace those who were lost and the need to undertake a greater role on the Western Front placed a heavy burden on the army. The voluntary system, in place since the beginning of the war, was no longer capable of meeting the demand for more men. The government had for some time been openly discussing the need to impose some form of compulsory service to solve the ongoing manpower shortage, both within the armed forces and in those industries crucial to the war effort. On 27 November 1915 the National Convention of the No-Conscription Fellowship met to 'consider ways and means of resistance to any form of Conscription that might follow the conclusion of the voluntary recruiting effort'. The Fellowship had been established late the previous year to oppose the introduction of conscription in Britain. The chairman of the Fellowship, Clifford Allen, addressed the public session of the convention. After providing a brief history of the Fellowship, he emphasized that the main objection to conscription was that ‘individual conscience alone must decide whether a man will sacrifice his own life’, not the state. At the end of his speech Allen proposed the following resolution: ‘That we, the delegates and members of the No-Conscription Fellowship ... fully conscious of the attempt that may be made to impose conscription on this country, recognising that such a system must destroy the sanctity of human life, betray the free traditions of our country and hinder its social and industrial emancipation ... hereby solemnly and sincerely reaffirm our intention to resist conscription, whatever the penalties may be.’ On 5 January 1916, Asquith, the prime minister, introduced a compulsory military service bill in the House of Commons. Shortly thereafter it passed into law. Clifford Allen, although eligible for an exemption from military service due to chronic ill health, would be sentenced to two years’ hard labour for refusing to perform non-combatant work as an alternative to military service. He was one of approximately 6,000 men imprisoned during the war for being a conscientious objector; in total, 16,000 men during the First World War declared themselves conscientious objectors.


RBP
DESIGNED BY LT. GEN. SIR R.S.S. BADEN POWELL
Are YOU in this?

Case 3

Popular Fiction

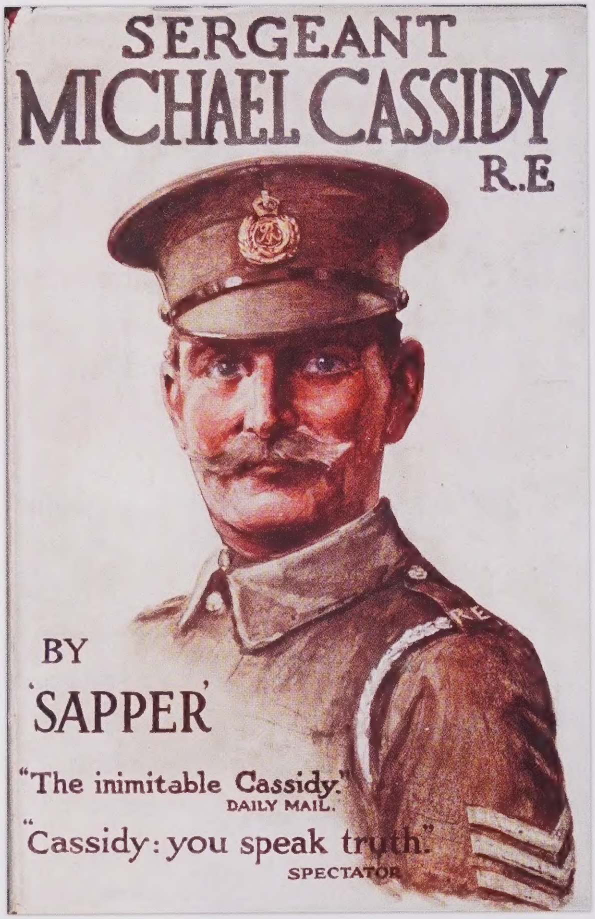
32. Ian Hay (1876-1952). *The First Hundred Thousand: Being the Unofficial Chronicle of a Unit of 'K(1)'*. Edinburgh; London: W. Blackwood, 1915.

33. Sapper (1888-1937). *Sergeant Michael Cassidy, R.E.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916.

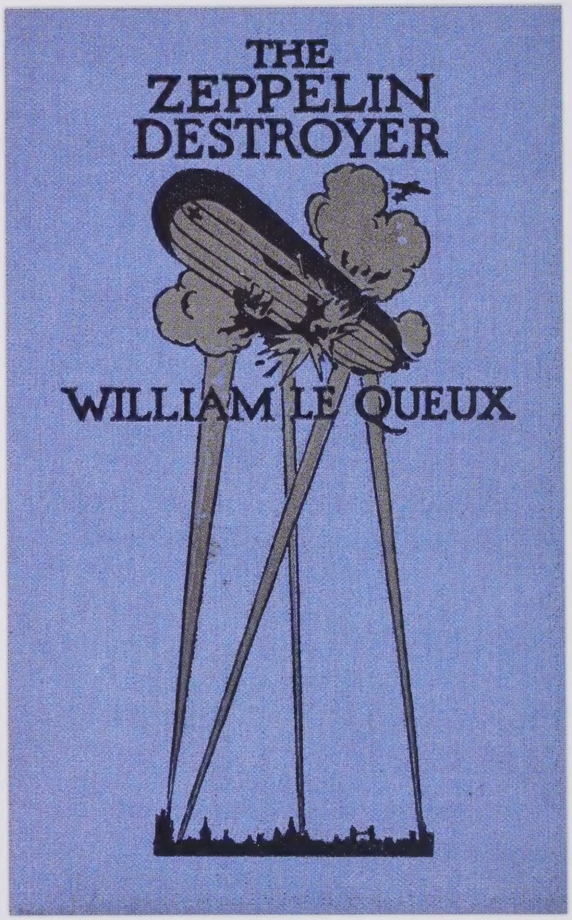
34. Harold Ashton. *Private Pinkerton, Millionaire*. London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, 1916.

35. William Le Queux. *The Zeppelin Destroyer: Being some Chapters of Secret History*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916.

Unlike the poetry of anger, disillusionment and despair of Sassoon, Owen and other likeminded soldier poets, no equivalent voice was heard in the fiction that appeared during the war. The one exception was French, not British, that of Henri Barbusse (1873-1935), whose searing novel *Le feu* was translated into English in 1917. Not surprisingly, the two works of fiction described in this section that come closest to depicting something of the reality of warfare on the Western Front were written by men who had actually served in the front-line trenches, John Hay Beith, writing under the pen name Ian Hay, and H. C. McNeile, better known as 'Sapper'. Beith was a schoolmaster by profession, but also a writer. The publication of his first novel in 1907, followed by several more in quick succession, led to the decision to make writing his career. When war was declared, Beith promptly joined a Scottish regiment, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, as a second lieutenant. His particular battalion formed part of Kitchener's Army (also known as the New Army or Armies), named after Lord Kitchener, Britain's Secretary of State for War. On 7 August 1914, sensing that


SERGEANT
MICHAEL CASSIDY
R.E
BY
'SAPPER'
"The inimitable Cassidy."
DAILY MAIL.
"Cassidy: you speak truth."
SPECTATOR

Sapper. Sergeant Michael Cassidy, R.E.


THE
ZEPPELIN
DESTROYER
WILLIAM LE QUEUX

William Le Queux. The Zeppelin Destroyer: Being some Chapters of Secret History.

the war would be a long-drawn-out affair, Kitchener made a direct appeal in the press for an initial recruitment of 100,000 volunteers to serve in the army. Beith's book *The First Hundred Thousand* is a record of a typical regiment of Kitchener's Army, in this case the fictitious Bruce and Wallace Highlanders, a unit made up almost entirely of citizen-soldiers. The story takes the battalion through several months of rigorous training in England to its arrival in France as a well-disciplined force capable of assuming its place in the trenches. After undergoing a baptism of fire in the front lines, the final chapter finds the battalion taking part in the disastrous Battle of Loos in late September 1915. This well-written and deeply engrossing novel captures the spirit of the British 'Tommy', seldom lapsing into hyperbole. The authenticity of the narrative also helps to explain why the book resonated with the reading public. Beith went on to publish two further novels in the series, *Carrying On – After the First Hundred Thousand* (1917), and *The Last Million* (1918).

Sergeant Michael Cassidy, R.E. was the first of five collections written by H. C. McNeile over the course of the war under the pseudonym Sapper. Like his irrepressible Irishman, Michael Cassidy, McNeile was a professional soldier serving in the British Army with the Royal Engineers, his chosen nom de plume, Sapper, being a nickname for combat engineers. The stories, which had previously appeared in the *Daily Mail* newspaper, cover the first months of the war and are told to an officer by Cassidy who is in England recovering from a bullet wound to his foot. Although at times humorous, the underlying tone is serious and anti-sentimental, and the descriptions of the dead and shell-shocked soldiers are grimly realistic and entirely believable. The book is a tribute to the old regular army that was decimated in the battles of 1914. First published in 1915 in a paper-covered edition, the copy on display is part of the Hodder and Stoughton one shilling cloth bound books series. Approximately 135,000 copies of *Sergeant Michael Cassidy, R.E.* were sold, testifying to its popularity.

In contrast to the works of Beith and McNeile, the books by the journalists Harold Ashton and William Le Queux display a lack of first-hand knowledge of the fighting on the Western Front, and most certainly a reticence to describe the true nature of the new warfare. They offer a far more uplifting, idealistic, and overtly patriotic view of the war, falling in line with official government policy to minimize negative images. In a series of twenty-three sketches or episodes, *Private Pinkerton, Millionaire* follows the title character as he goes about his daily life in the trenches. Le Queux's novel, *The Zeppelin Destroyer*, is a typical if somewhat fanciful spy story, involving the development of a new weapon with which the British can destroy the Zeppelin airships bombing London, and the secret German spy ring, the nefarious 'Invisible Hand', bent on stealing it from the intrepid inventors. After the heroes thwart all attempts by the German agents to obtain the device, they successfully shoot down an airship before the Zeppelin can drop its deadly cargo of bombs. The Zeppelin menace was real, and caused considerable panic among the civilian population. Le Queux's choice of subject is one he knew would appeal to his readers, even if the story itself seems contrived, the dialogue stilted and the science behind the invention more than a little suspect.

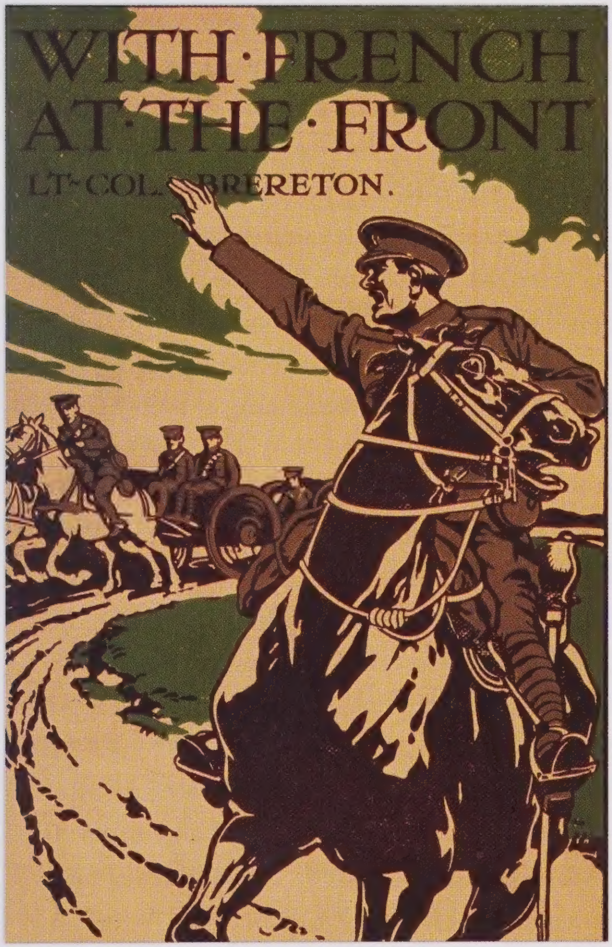
Juvenile Literature

36. F. S. Brereton (1872-1957). *With French at the Front: A Story of the Great European War down to the Battle of the Aisne.* London and Glasgow: Blackie, [192-?].

37. Percy F. Westerman (1876-1959). *Under the White Ensign: A Naval Story of the Great War.* London; Glasgow: Blackie, [192-?].

38. John Gilbert Thompson (1862-1940) and Inez Bigwood. *Lest We Forget: World War Stories.* Boston; New York; Chicago: Silver, Burdett, 1918.

Frederick Sadleir Brereton was a popular and prolific author of boys' adventure stories, similar in style to those of the great master of the genre, G. A. Henty (1832-1902). Over his career Brereton wrote more than fifty books, of which at least fourteen were concerned with the First World War. Trained as a military surgeon, Brereton retired from the army in 1902 with the rank of captain to



F. S. Brereton. With French at the Front: A Story of the Great European War down to the Battle of the Aisne.

concentrate on his writing. The outbreak of war in 1914 saw Brereton re-enlist with the Royal Army Medical Corps where he was responsible for recording its wartime activities. The work left him sufficient time to write several books on the British Army and its allies fighting in the various theatres of war, with titles like *Under Foch's Command*, *With Allenby in Palestine* and *Under Haig in Flanders*. *With French at the Front* tells the story of the first weeks of the war, a phase noted for the rapid movement of large armies and sharp cavalry skirmishes, before the front line stabilized and trenches were dug. The hero of the piece, the peripatetic Captain James Fletcher, finds himself embroiled in a series of desperate encounters with the enemy, fighting alongside the infantry, flying an airplane, participating in a cavalry charge, and serving aboard a Royal Navy destroyer. The appeal of the story to a young reader is obvious. The 'French' in the title refers to Field-Marshal Sir John French (1852-1925), the commander-in-chief of the British Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders. First published in 1915, internal evidence suggests that the copy on display is a later printing.

Under the White Ensign by Percy F. Westerman focuses on the Royal Navy and the war at sea. Success with his early published efforts led him to quit his clerical position in Portsmouth Dockyard and begin writing children's adventure stories full time. Westerman's literary output dwarfs that of his contemporary, F. S. Brereton; over a career spanning six decades, he wrote a staggering one hundred and seventy-eight books, the last of which was published shortly after his death. Sales of his stories were equally impressive, with approximately 1.6 million copies sold during his lifetime. *Under the White Ensign*, published in 1917, follows the usual pattern of stories of this type. Our young hero, Sub-Lieutenant Tom Webb, serving aboard an armed merchant-cruiser, and assisted by his fellow sailors, does battle with the German foe. Over the course of the book they sink enemy submarines, shoot down airplanes, foil a German spy plot, and survive the sinking of their own ship to fight another day.

Children were not only entertained by the many published fictional stories of the heroic adventures of their country's military, but were also presented with opportunities to read factual accounts of the war and its progress. Educators, recognizing the value of teaching the young the reasons why the war began and the issues that were at heart of the conflict, introduced books of this nature into the curriculum of school systems across North America. Another obvious purpose was to expose the children to the values and principles their society held dear. *Lest We Forget* is one such example. The two authors make it very clear in the preface to the book that their intention was 'to set before the pupils the war's unparalleled deeds of heroism, with the aims and ideals which have inspired them, and which have led American youth to look upon the sacrifice of life as none too high a price to pay for the liberation of mankind'. This combination of the heroic and the didactic made for a readable and entertaining book. Some chapters focused on individuals, such as the French general, Joseph Joffre (1852-1931), Rupert Brooke, and Alan Seeger (1888-1916), the American poet killed while serving with the French Foreign Legion. The most compelling, however, are those chapters that examine the acts of brutality committed by the German military: the execution of the nurse, Edith Cavell; the sinking of the Lusitania, with the loss of one hundred and twenty-eight American lives; the destruction of Louvain; and 'The Hun target: the Red Cross', which describes the indiscriminate killing of prisoners of war. Children were not considered too young to learn about the horrors of war.

Popular Histories and Memoirs

39. *The War Illustrated.* Vol.2, no. 40 (22 May 1915). London: Printed and published by the Amalgamated Press, 1915.

The outbreak of war prompted a demand from the British public for information on the conflict, and most especially, on the actions involving its own soldiers. The government and military authorities, however, were determined from the outset to control the flow of information and to ensure that any communiqués released by the news agencies presented the Allied efforts in a favourable light. The establishment of a press bureau within the War Office, tasked with the responsibility of censoring all such reports, was the mechanism by which this control was exercised. War correspondents were denied permission to visit the front; all reporting from military areas was limited to the relatively small number of individuals who, over the course of the war, were officially accredited to do so by the government. This, of course, made the newspapers and current affairs publications dependent upon official sources for news about what was taking place in the different theatres of war. The results, not surprisingly, were sanitized accounts of the battles and campaigns, often focusing on the martial qualities of the generals and the bravery of the troops in overcoming German defences.

Official censorship did not prevent newspaper and magazine proprietors from capitalizing on their readers' desire to follow the progress of the war by issuing weekly publications that catered to this interest. Many of the major dailies, most notably *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*, published these affordably priced titles. *The War Illustrated* was another such example. Extremely popular – circulation at one point reached 750,000 – most issues were twenty pages in length and contained one- or two-page articles, occasionally by writers of note like H. G. Wells and Sir Gilbert Parker, and short propaganda pieces with titles such as 'The demoniacal destruction of the Lusitania', or '"My handiwork!' by the Pirate Emperor'. The main emphasis, however, was on the many official photographs and drawings that were reproduced. The parts were also gathered together and offered as bound volumes, ultimately growing to ten in number. In the first bound volume that came out in 1915, the editor, J. A. Hammerton (1871-1949), wrote: 'It was felt that, in view of the great importance of its pictorial contents and the popular form in which the publication was first issued on cheap newsprint, an edition printed on superior paper would do more justice to the illustrations, and would, naturally, endure much longer.'

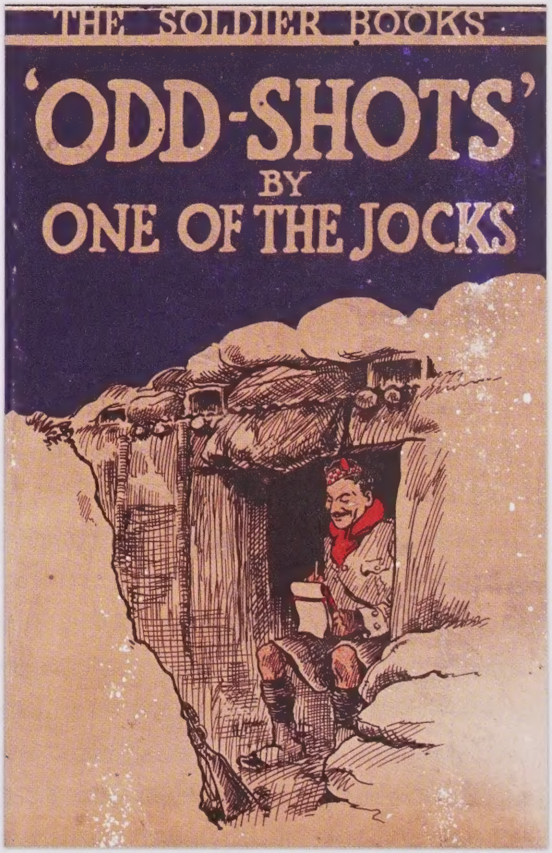
40. Arthur Corbett-Smith (1879-1945). *The Retreat from Mons: By One who shared in It.* London: Cassell, 1916.

Major Corbett-Smith was a professional soldier serving with the Royal Horse Artillery in the pre-war British Army. His unit was part of the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) that was sent to France soon after the war with Germany began. By 20 August 1914 four British divisions of infantry and one of cavalry had moved into position near the Mons Canal, extending the French left-wing opposite the Belgian border. German forces, meanwhile, had been advancing through Belgium, and on August 23 attacked the British lines. Heavily outnumbered (approximately 80,000 men compared to the German 160,000), the British fought well, inflicting serious casualties; but the sheer weight of German numbers and the withdrawal of French troops to their right forced the British to retreat. A second battle took place three days later at Le Cateau, once again pushing the British back. Corbett-Smith's first-hand account was written for the general public, not for military experts. He eschews detailed explanations of the movement of troops or the tactics each side employed. Instead, he presents one person's perspective on the first engagement between the British and Germans in what would be a very long war. The book is dedicated to General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien (1858-1930), the commander of the Second Army Corps.

41. *Odd Shots.* By One of the Jocks. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916.

42. *A 'Temporary Gentleman' in France: Home Letters from an Officer in the New Army*. London: Cassell, 1916.

These two books were supposedly written by junior officers serving in the British Army on the Western Front. In neither instance is the officer identified nor is the name of his battalion or unit given, although in the case of *A 'Temporary Gentleman' in France*, the author was in fact A. J. Dawson (1872-1951). Dawson did serve in the trenches and later worked as a propagandist within MI7, the section of the Directorate of Military Intelligence responsible for censorship and foreign and domestic propaganda. What is very clear is that the books were intended to provide the general public with a 'true' picture of everyday life in the trenches, and to offer assurances that their soldiers were coping well under difficult and dangerous circumstances. Both authors describe in some detail the different aspects of trench warfare: the seemingly never-ending hard physical labour required to maintain the defences and to feed and equip the troops; the frequent wiring parties sent out to install or repair the barbed wire protecting their forward positions; and the ever-present enemy, often only a few hundred feet away, firing indiscriminately at any movement in the British line, and regularly sending over salvos of artillery shells. Moments of drama and intense excitement relieve the general boredom of trench life, with night patrols in No Man's Land, and the



Odd Shots. By One of the Jocks.

organizing of the occasional raiding party to take prisoners and to gather information about the German military formations opposite the British positions.

Where the books differ is in tone. The author of *Odd Shots* tends to take a more light-hearted approach to the vagaries of the soldier's life, finding humour in many of the day-to-day experiences. Unlike *A 'Temporary Gentleman' in France*, he makes little or no mention of the hardships he and his comrades face, the desolate landscape, the mud, the stench and vermin, and the ever-present fear of death or mutilation. *A 'Temporary Gentleman' in France* presents a far more convincing and informative portrait of trench warfare. The narrative device of reprinting the officer's letters he sent home is effective, although they are written in such a way that one rather suspects they are meant to be representative of the average junior officer serving on the Western Front. Together the two books reinforce the popular image of the British soldier as brave, tough, resilient, high-spirited, eager to come to grips with the enemy, and supremely confident of ultimate victory.

43. John Masefield (1878-1967). *Gallipoli.* London: W. Heinemann, 1916.

The reasons for the British considering Turkey's Gallipoli Peninsula as a favourable location for attack were many and complex. Winston Churchill (1874-1965), the First Lord of the Admiralty, saw in this plan an alternative to the stalemate of the Western Front. There were the added advantages of diverting Turkish forces from operations against Russia, and of persuading Bulgaria to enter the war on the side of the Allies. After much discussion and debate, the British War Council agreed to send a naval expedition to shell the forts protecting the peninsula, force the Dardanelles Straits, enter the Sea of Marmora and take the city of Constantinople. In spite of a lengthy preliminary naval bombardment, the attempt to sail through the straits failed with the loss of several battleships. Troops from Britain, Australia and New Zealand were landed on the peninsula at the end of April 1915 in an attempt to assist the navy by capturing the Turkish forts. The initial landings were successful, but the assaults quickly ground to a halt. Over the next several months the Allied forces were to retain a precarious foothold, but in November 1915 the decision was made to evacuate the soldiers from the peninsula. The failure of the campaign cost the British and Empire forces approximately 200,000 casualties.

The writer John Masefield spent a short time in the Dardanelles on behalf of the Red Cross. On his return to England he wrote an account of Gallipoli, choosing to stress the achievements of the campaign rather than its failures. In one passage at the beginning of the book Masefield states that he 'began to consider the Dardanelles Campaign, not as a tragedy, nor as a mistake, but as a great human effort, which came, more than once, very near to triumph, achieved the impossible many times ... ' This attitude was very much in line with British propaganda efforts to minimize military disasters.

44. Bruce Bairnsfather (1887-1959). *Bullets & Billets.* London: Grant Richards, 1916.

45. Bruce Bairnsfather. *More Fragments from France (Vol. II).* London: The Bystander, [1916].

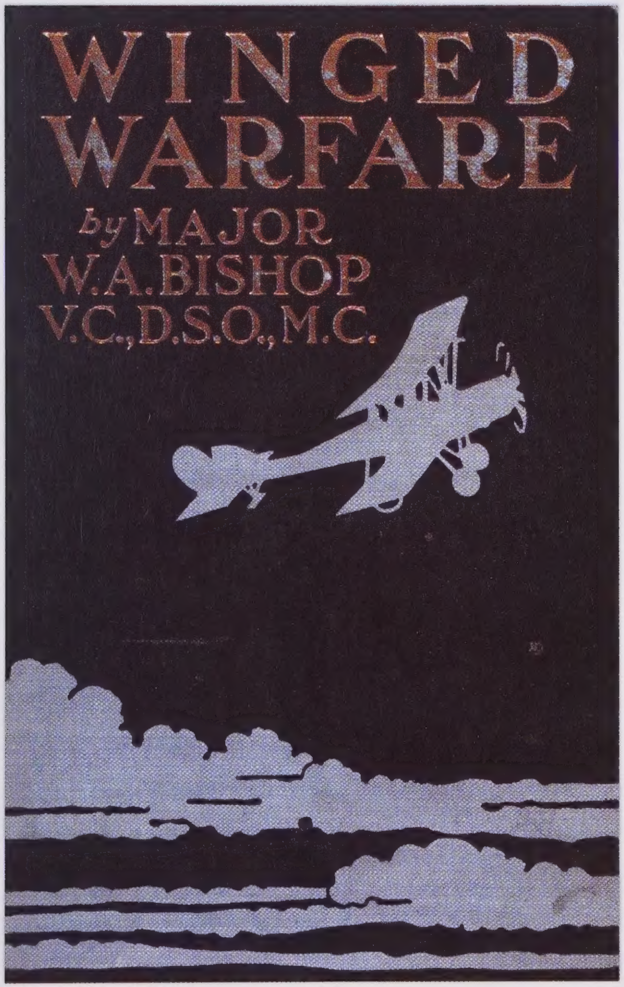
One of the great publishing success stories of the First World War was the appearance in print of the artwork of a junior officer in the British Army that captured the public imagination, and offered a much needed and humorous alternative to the grim reality of life in the trenches. The young artist was Bruce Bairnsfather of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, who was badly shell-shocked during the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915. While in the trenches, Bairnsfather began to draw cartoons on any object that came to hand - scraps of paper, ration boxes, even the cottage walls of the place where he was billeted - and these sketches became popular with his comrades. A fellow officer suggested he submit one of the drawings to a weekly magazine back home called *The Bystander*, and to Bairnsfather's surprise, it was accepted for publication. The cartoons of three soldiers, Old Bill, the quintessential grizzled veteran who remains unfazed while all about him descends into chaos, and Alf and Bert, the slightly bemused and unsoldierly comrades in arms, were an immediate sensation. The magazine requested more drawings, and in early 1916 issued the first of eight collections of Bairnsfather's work under the title *Fragments from France*. The volume sold more than two hundred and fifty thousand copies; by the fourth volume, a total of 1,725,000 copies had been printed.

Bullets & Billets, Bairnsfather's memoir, covers the period from his arrival in France at the port of Le Havre near the end of November 1914, to his return to England following the injuries he sustained from the German shelling. The most poignant episode of which he was a part occurred during the first Christmas of the war, when soldiers from both sides spontaneously left their trenches and met in No Man's Land to exchange presents and offer each other season's greetings.

46. Keble Howard (1875-1928). *The Zeebrugge Affair*. New York: George H. Doran, [1918].

In the early hours of 23 April 1918, St. George's Day, a British seaborne force carried out a daring attack on the German-held Belgian port of Zeebrugge. The purpose of the raid was to neutralize Zeebrugge as a base for German submarine operations by deliberately sinking ships to block the exits of the port. Unfortunately for the British, the assault failed and more than five hundred men were killed or wounded. This did not prevent the Allied propaganda machine from hailing the attack as a great success, and praising the fortitude and bravery of the officers and sailors who took part in the operation, eight of whom were subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross. Keble Howard, the pseudonym of John Keble Bell, wrote one of these positive accounts.

47. William Avery Bishop (1894-1956). *Winged Warfare*. Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, 1918.



William Avery Bishop. Winged Warfare.

With seventy-two credited victories, William 'Billy' Bishop was the highest scoring Canadian ace of the Great War. The popular press made heroes of these 'knights of the air', splashing sensational stories of their successes across the newspapers. Demand for accounts of their lives was strong, and aces on both sides were requested to pen quick memoirs: Germany's Manfred von Richthofen (1892-1918), the famous 'Red Baron', and the Englishman, James McCudden (1895-1918) were two such examples. Bishop's book was written in the fall and winter of 1917/1918 while he was on an extended leave in Canada and the United States, making public appearances to encourage enlistment. The book offered an intimate look at the life of a fighter pilot in those early days of flight when the life expectancy of a pilot at the front was measured in a few short weeks. Bishop excelled in the business of flying and shooting down German aircraft, and this comes through in his exciting descriptions of aerial duels above the clouds.

Controversy surrounds Bishop's flying career. In 1982, the National Film Board of Canada released a docudrama, *The Kid Who Couldn't Miss*, which questioned the accuracy and veracity of his war record. Citing various sources, the film claimed that the action for which Bishop was awarded the Victoria Cross, the British Empire's highest medal for bravery, never actually happened and that he deliberately falsified his combat report. Some historians have also raised serious doubts about Bishop's aerial victories, concluding he shot down far fewer enemy planes than the number for which he was credited. Bishop's latest biographer, after careful review, concedes that one third of his aerial victories should be subtracted from his total (McCaffery, p. 10). His war years have been treated more sympathetically in a popular stage play, *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, written by and starring Eric Peterson and John Gray.

Case 4

The Soldier Poets

48. Rupert Brooke (1887-1915). *1914 and Other Poems.* London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1915.

Described by W. B. Yeats (1865-1939) as the most handsome man in England, Rupert Brooke epitomizes the 'lost generation', all those young men of promise whose lives were tragically cut short by the war. He has also come to represent the voice of innocence, idealism and patriotism, indicative of the poetry written during the early phase of the conflict. Already an established poet, and closely associated with pre-war Georgian poetry, Brooke was commissioned in the Royal Naval Division, was present during the evacuation of Antwerp in October 1914, and died rather ingloriously of septicaemia, the result of an infected insect bite, while on his way to Gallipoli. Best remembered for his war sonnets, and in particular the much quoted 'The Soldier' with its opening lines: 'If I should die, think only this of me:/ That there's some corner of a foreign field/ that is for ever England', his words did seem to reflect the prevailing mood of the country. Barely a few short weeks before Brooke's death, William Inge (1860-1954), the dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, read 'The Soldier', without mentioning the poet's name, during his Easter Sunday sermon. The following day *The Times* printed the sermon and included the poem, with a note identifying Brooke as the poet. Writing in the same newspaper upon learning of Brooke's death, Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, offered a moving and eloquent eulogy: 'A voice had become audible, a note had been struck, more true, more thrilling, more able to do justice to the nobility of our youth in arms engaged in this present war, than any other - more able to express their thoughts of self-surrender, and with a power to carry comfort to those who watch them so intently from afar. The voice has been swiftly stilled. Only the echoes and the memory remain; but they will linger.' And linger they did. Brooke remained Britain's most popular poet both during and after the war, with his posthumously published book of verse, *1914 and Other Poems*, going through twenty-eight impressions by 1920.

49. Charles Hamilton Sorley (1895-1915). *Marlborough and Other Poems.* Cambridge: At the University Press, 1916.

The son of a professor of moral philosophy at Cambridge, Charles Hamilton Sorley had a typical English middle-class upbringing. After Charles finished his public school career at Marlborough College in December 1913, his father decided to send him to Germany before he entered University College, Oxford on a scholarship the following summer. Arriving in Germany in January 1914, Sorley spent his time there improving his knowledge of the language and taking courses at one of the universities. With the political situation in Europe deteriorating rapidly, at the end of July he made the decision to return home. Although briefly detained by the German authorities, Sorley was able to cross into Belgium on 3 August, and take passage on a ship back to England.

Unlike so many other young men of his generation, Sorley had no desire to go to war, nor, given his recent experiences in Germany, did he harbour any ill-feeling towards the Germans. In a letter written to a friend, he explained 'that Germany's only fault ... is a lack of real insight and sympathy with those who differ from her. We are not fighting a bully, but a bigot. They are a young nation and don't yet see that what they consider is being done for the good of the world may be really being done for self-gratification ... ' (*Collected Letters*, p. 193). He did, however, realize that he had no choice but to volunteer to fight for his country. Commissioned a second lieutenant in the Suffolk Regiment, Sorley, for the next several months, underwent basic training and learned the skills required of a young infantry officer. Once training was completed, he and his battalion departed for France at the end of May 1915 to join other elements of Kitchener's New Army. Promoted to captain soon afterwards, Sorley was killed in action, aged twenty, on 13 October 1915 while organizing the defences of his company's trenches during the Battle of Loos.

Sorley's poetry and published letters reveal a maturity and sensitivity remarkable in one so young. His unromantic, unsentimental view of the war is reflected in much of what he wrote. As the most recent editor of Sorley's poems noted, 'philosophically he is far closer to later, grimmer, more disillusioned poets such as Owen, Sassoon and Rosenberg' (Wilson, ed., *The Collected Poems of Charles Hamilton Sorley*, p. 7). A very popular book, *Marlborough and Other Poems* had, by 1919, gone through four editions.

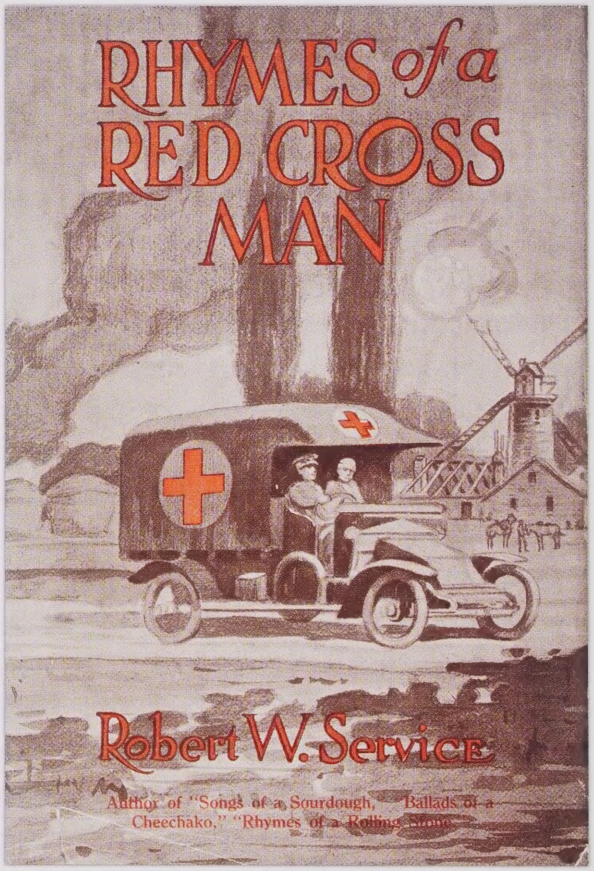
50. William Noel Hodgson (1893-1916). *Verse and Prose in Peace and War*. London: Smith, Elder, 1916.

At 7:30 a.m. on 1 July 1916, large numbers of British troops climbed out of their trenches and began to move slowly across No Man's Land toward the German positions. The long anticipated British offensive on the Somme had finally begun. By day's end and against negligible gains, the British army had suffered more than fifty-seven thousand casualties, of whom nearly twenty thousand were killed, making this the worst single-day disaster in its history. Among those who died was Lieutenant William Noel Hodgson. The youngest son of the Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Hodgson went to Christ Church, Oxford, but left the university to enlist at the outbreak of war. His first year as a soldier was spent training in England with other units of Kitchener's New Army. At the end of July 1915 his battalion, the 9th Devons, was sent to France, and soon saw action at the Battle of Loos. In recognition of the bravery he displayed during the battle, Hodgson was awarded the Military Cross. His best remembered poem, and the one that most often appears in First World War poetry anthologies, is 'Before Action'. Quoted below is the final verse:

I, that on my familiar hill
  Saw with uncomprehending eyes
A hundred of Thy sunsets spill
  Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,
Ere the sun swings his noonday sword
  Must say good-bye to all of this ;-
By all delights that I shall miss,
  Help me to die, O Lord.

Perhaps Hodgson had a presentiment of his own death, for the poem was composed two days before he was killed in action. He is buried in a small cemetery, which overlooks the village of Mametz, the 9th Devons' objective on 1 July, with those of his comrades who also fell in the battle. A notice erected nearby says simply this: 'The Devonshires held this trench. The Devonshires hold it still.'

51. Robert W. Service (1874–1958). *Rhymes of a Red Cross Man.* Toronto: William Briggs, 1916.


RHYMES of a RED CROSS MAN
Robert W. Service
Author of "Songs of a Sourdough," "Ballads of a Cheechako," "Rhymes of a Rolling Stone."

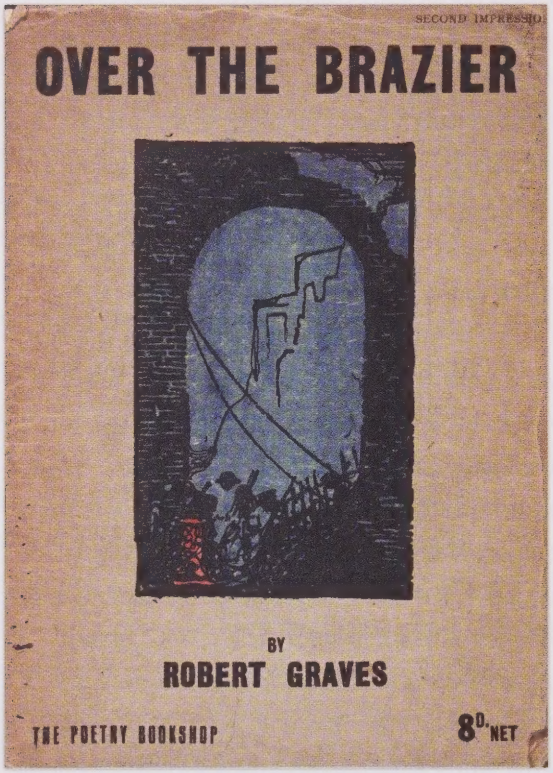
Robert W. Service. Rhymes of a Red Cross Man.

Famous throughout the English-speaking world as the 'Bard of the Yukon', and author of popular poems like 'The Shooting of Dan McGrew', Service was forty years old when the war broke out. That did not stop him from attempting to enlist, but his application was rejected on medical grounds. In September 1915 while in Paris, Service saw a notice in a newspaper announcing the formation of an American ambulance unit to be attached to the French army, and the need for drivers. He volunteered, and as a 'gentleman driver', Service was given an officer's rank. His time as a driver offered him a unique perspective on the war and the terrible aftermath of the fighting. Driving at night was the hardest part of the job. ‘We could not show the faintest light and the roads were pitted with shell holes. It was nerve-racking, crawling on low speed, with a badly wounded man along those coal-black devastated roads.’ (Service, p. 79). Service may not have been a soldier, but he did share many of the dangers and discomforts of the front-line troops, and the poetry that resulted from these experiences reflects that reality. *Rhymes of a Red Cross Man* is dedicated to the memory of Service’s younger brother, Albert, a lieutenant in the 52nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, who was killed by a German shell on 18 August 1916, near Ypres.

52. Joseph Lee (1876-1949). *Ballads of Battle.* Toronto: S. B. Gundy, 1916.

Joseph Lee was almost forty years of age when he joined the legendary Scottish regiment, the Black Watch, in his home town of Dundee. Unlike many of the other war poets in this exhibition, who came from middle- or upper-class families, Lee’s background was solidly working-class. He was forced to leave school at the age of fourteen so that he could earn money to help support his widowed mother. A talented artist and occasional poet, his black-and-white sketches and cartoons appeared in many of the local newspapers and magazines before the war. While in the trenches on the Western Front, Lee was often seen sketching or writing poems. These drawings and jottings were collected together and published in book form in April 1916 under the title *Ballads of Battle.* A second volume of verse, *Work-a-day Warriors*, following the same pattern as the previous book with poems and the poet’s illustrations, came out in 1917. That same year Lee accepted a commission as a second lieutenant, but was captured at the end of the Battle of Cambrai, and spent the rest of the war as a German prisoner.

53. Robert Graves (1895-1985). *Over the Brazier.* London: The Poetry Bookshop, 1916 [i.e. 1917].



Robert Graves. Over the Brazier.

Best known today perhaps for his novels of the Roman emperor Claudius, and the BBC television adaptation, Robert Graves had just finished his last term at Charterhouse, the English public school, and celebrated his nineteenth birthday, when war was declared. In little over a week he had received a commission in the Royal Welch Fusiliers, one of the finest regiments in the British Army. By May 1915 Graves was in France, taking his turn in the trenches and participating in the obligatory night patrols in No Man's Land. That November a new officer appeared in the regiment, Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967), and despite the nine-year age gap between the two men, he and Graves became close friends, often reading and commenting on each other's poems. *Over the Brazier*, Graves's first book of poetry, was published in May 1916 by Harold Monro (1879-1932) under his Poetry Bookshop imprint, to generally positive reviews: *The Spectator* said the poems had 'a touch of true originality, both in the style and in the thoughts underlying the style'. The war poems reflect the grim reality of trench warfare and leave the reader with haunting images of dead soldiers and desolate landscapes.

On 1 July 1916 the British offensive on the Somme began. Graves's unit did not participate in the initial attacks, but remained close behind the lines, in reserve, waiting for the order to move forward. While shifting his position to escape the worst of a German artillery barrage, Graves was struck between the shoulder blades by a shell fragment, which severely damaged a lung before exiting the chest. The battalion doctor bandaged the wound, but was certain the injury was fatal. To everyone's surprise, Graves survived the night and was immediately evacuated to a nearby hospital. A report of his death, however, had been sent to his family, and Graves's name appeared in *The Times* among those listed as having been killed during the battle. His recovery was slow, but by the end of January 1917 Graves was back in the front lines with his men. Recurring problems with the weakened lung and the delayed effects of shell shock prevented him from remaining in the trenches. Graves would continue to suffer from the symptoms of this nervous disorder for much of the 1920s.

54. Ivor Gurney (1890-1937). *Severn & Somme.* London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1917.

From an early age Ivor Gurney displayed both an appreciation of and an aptitude for music. As a young boy he earned a place in the Gloucester Cathedral Choir and also began to study the organ and to compose music. In 1911 Gurney won an open scholarship to the Royal College of Music. The music and the poetry he wrote resonate with his love of nature and of the Gloucestershire and Severn valley countryside, areas with which he became very familiar through the many walks he took. Throughout his adolescence Gurney displayed a decided eccentricity, but by age twenty-three he 'was beginning to show signs of a marked emotional and physical instability' (Hurd, p. 43). Gurney's first attempt at enlisting soon after the war began met with failure because of his poor eyesight. He tried again in February 1915, and this time was successful, joining the 2nd/5th Gloucesters as a private. His service at the front was similar to that of countless other men in the ranks: time in the front lines struggling to survive the often haphazard dangers that were a daily part of trench life, interspersed with periods in the back areas on fatigues, training and resting. By and large he seemed to enjoy his days as a soldier, and continued to write poetry and compose music. With the assistance of friends back in England, Gurney arranged to have some of his poems published by the firm Sidgwick & Jackson. The slim volume, comprising forty-six poems, appeared in October 1917. As he noted in the preface to the book, with the exception of two or three earlier pieces, all of the verses were written in France 'and in the sound of the guns'. In April 1917 Gurney was shot through the right arm and spent the next six weeks recuperating in a French hospital before returning to his battalion. Later that year, after inhaling gas, he was invalided home. Unfortunately, while recovering from the ill effects of the gas, Gurney appeared to suffer a nervous breakdown. By May 1918 his condition had worsened considerably and he was sent to a hospital known for treating war neuroses. Discharged from the army in October of that year, Gurney returned to Gloucester in a fragile state. He was, however, well enough by January 1919 to resume his studies at the Royal College of Music, where his composition teacher was Vaughan Williams. Once again his mental and physical health deteriorated, and in September 1922 he was committed to a mental asylum. He died there in 1937 of tuberculosis.

55. E. A. Mackintosh (1893-1917). *War, the Liberator: and other Pieces.* London: John Lane, 1918.

Ewart Alan Mackintosh, of Scottish parentage, was born and raised in England and was at Christ Church, Oxford on a Classics scholarship when war was declared. Commissioned as a subaltern (second lieutenant), Mackintosh joined the 5th Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders, one of the many Scottish regiments in the British Army. Wounded and gassed in July 1916 at High Wood during the Battle of the Somme, he returned to the front the following year and was killed shortly afterwards in the fighting around Cambrai. As mentioned in the brief memoir at the beginning of the book, his war poems 'evade the circumstance and horror of war. There is strangely little, indeed, about the war in any of them ... ' *War, the Liberator*, published posthumously, was Mackintosh's second volume of poetry. His first book, *A Highland Regiment*, appeared in January 1917 to positive reviews. The third edition of this work, which came out in 1918, carried a publisher's note indicating that the author had been killed in action.

56. Hartley Munro Thomas (1896-1970). *Songs of an Airman, and other Poems.* Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, 1918.

As with so many other young Canadian men who enlisted, Thomas began his military career in an infantry battalion. Just eighteen when Canada went to war, he was studying history and political science at Queen's University in Kingston. Returning home to Vancouver, he received a commission in a local unit, the 131st Battalion, but went to France as a replacement officer with the 67th Battalion (Western Scots) during the Battle of the Somme. Soon after the Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge in April 1917, Thomas transferred to the Royal Flying Corps, where he was engaged mainly in aerial artillery observation. This volume contains an interesting mix of poems: some, written early in the war, are typically patriotic, but others reflect the poet's experiences in the trenches and in the air. Poems of the latter type include 'The Trench Poppy', 'Woods of Flanders', and 'Hymn for Aviators'. Thomas survived the war and became a professor of history at the University of Western Ontario in London.

57. Siegfried Sassoon. *Four Poems: Dreamers, Base Details, Does It Matter? Glory of Women.* Cambridge: R. I. Severs, 1918.

58. Siegfried Sassoon. *Counter-attack and Other Poems.* London: W. Heinemann, 1918.

59. Siegfried Sassoon. Holograph letter to J. E. Wetherell, dated 12 November 1920.

If Rupert Brooke is associated with the poetry of romantic idealism and noble sacrifice, Siegfried Sassoon most closely identifies with the poetry of protest and disillusionment, of a realistic, brutal depiction of the horrors of war and its terrible futility. Although Sassoon's early war poetry betrayed an innocence born of the inexperience of war, Robert Graves, a fellow officer in his regiment, the Royal Welch Fusiliers, and a poet who had been in battle, soon played an important role in influencing Sassoon to change his style of writing. As Sassoon commented: 'He taught me to be natural and idiomatic ... ' (Egremont, p. 75). The death of a popular fellow officer and his own first-hand experiences of war also profoundly affected Sassoon's attitude to the war and to his poetry. Simple expressions of patriotism and naive heroism were replaced by a new-found realism in his work, and a loathing for the complacency and jingoism of those he encountered while on leave in England. Anger towards the war, its waste, and those he blamed for its continuance, the politicians and civilians, led him in 1917 to a well-intentioned, if misguided, personal protest against the war. In a written statement submitted to his commanding officer, Sassoon accused the country's political leaders of deliberately prolonging the war, and of turning the conflict from one of defence and liberation to a war of aggression and conquest. The military authorities reacted leniently, and chose to view Sassoon's protest as a sign of mental imbalance caused by his recent time in the trenches: he was sent to Craiglockhart Hospital in Edinburgh to be treated for a nervous breakdown. Once released, Sassoon returned to the war, was wounded by friendly fire, and was convalescing in England when the church bells announcing the armistice were rung.

A number of Sassoon's poems appeared first in *The Cambridge Magazine*, a weekly publication that became a forum for dissenting opinion during the war. The magazine also offered Sassoon's work for sale in a reprint series, including *Four Poems*. Many of the verses in *Counter-attack and Other Poems* were written while Sassoon was staying at Craiglockhart. Published just before he returned to the trenches in July 1918, the paper-bound edition sold well, and a second impression, bound in cloth, was printed.

James Elgin Wetherell (1851-1940), a Canadian educator and anthologist, wrote to Sassoon near the end of 1920, requesting permission to include poems of his in a proposed anthology of modern English poetry. In his response, Sassoon did not allow Wetherell to reprint 'To Victory', but agreed to permit the inclusion of 'Aftermath'. 'Any war poetry read in schools must, in my opinion, be poetry of actual experience, & To Victory is not a poem of experience. Aftermath is a warning, based on 4 years experience in the army.' In the preface to his *Later English Poems 1901-1922*, Wetherell mentioned that nearly all of the poets included were consulted and had approved his choices. He does, however, qualify this by stating: 'It is true that two or three in the gentlest fashion made suggestions which were most gratefully received and acted upon'. In the end Wetherell selected Sassoon's 'Sick Leave' and 'Song-books of the War', neither of which is representative of his passionate, angry anti-war poems.

60. Pamela Grey (1871-1928). *Edward Wyndham Tennant.* London: John Lane, 1919.

Edward Tennant (1897-1916) was the eldest son of Lord Glenconner. His parents were part of an upper- and upper-middle-class social group known as 'The Souls', which included such luminaries as George Curzon (1859-1925), later the Viceroy of India, Arthur Balfour (1848-1930), a future prime minister, and the Duke and Duchess of Rutland. Their children would also form a group, 'The Coterie', and sadly most of the young male members did not survive the war; men such as Julian Grenfell, Edward Horner (1888-1917), Raymond Asquith (1878-1916), Charles Lister (1887-1915) and Patrick Shaw-Stewart (1888-1917). Although he was only seventeen years of age when the war began, Tennant's application to enlist was accepted and he received a commission in the 4th Battalion of the Grenadier Guards, an elite formation whose officers were drawn from the upper classes. Among those serving with him were Harold Macmillan (1894-1986), another future prime minister, and Osbert Sitwell (1892-1969), with whom he shared a dugout following the Battle of Loos. Tennant was killed on 22 September 1916 at the Somme, a battle that lasted four and a half months and claimed over 400,000 British casualties. He is buried in Guillemont Road Cemetery near the grave of Asquith, a fellow Grenadier Guardsman. Tennant's book of verse, *Worple Flit and Other Poems*, was published by Basil Blackwell in 1916.

In this memoir of her son, Pamela, Lady Glenconner, quotes extensively from the letters he wrote home from the trenches. In his last letter to her, dated two days before his death, Tennant sensed he might not survive. His final thoughts were of her: 'Your love for me and my love for you, have made my whole life one of the happiest there has ever been; Brutus' farewell to Cassius sounds in my heart: “If not farewell; and if we meet again, we shall smile.” Now all my blessings go with you, and with all we love. God bless you, and give you peace.’

61. Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918). *Poems.* London: W. Heinemann, 1922.

Along with Wilfred Owen (1893-1918), Isaac Rosenberg is considered by many to be one of the finest war poets of the Great War. Poems such as ‘Break of Day in the Trenches’ with the highly descriptive line about a ‘queer sardonic rat’, and ‘Dead Man’s Dump’ with its graphic and unsettling images, are rightly considered among the most striking and powerful poems written during the war. Rosenberg came from an impoverished east end London Jewish family, and throughout his short life the spectre of poverty was never far away. Although showing an early talent for drawing and for writing, Rosenberg was forced by the family’s financial circumstances to leave school at fourteen to seek work. While apprenticed to an engraver, however, he was able to take art classes in the evening, and with the financial assistance of friends, he quit his job to study art at the prestigious Slade School in London. The outbreak of war found Rosenberg in South Africa where he had gone to paint after leaving the Slade. He abhorred war (one biographer called him ‘an indecisive pacifist’), and had no desire to return to England to enlist, but he did sail for home in February 1915. In late October 1915, for conflicting reasons including lack of money, Rosenberg joined the army as a private. By the following June, after weeks of difficult physical training and learning the rudiments of soldiering, he crossed the Channel to France. Over the next twenty-two months Rosenberg would continue to write poetry as his battalion moved in and out of the trenches. On 21 March 1918 the German army launched a massive spring offensive against the British lines on the Arras-St. Quentin front in hopes of winning the war before the arrival of American forces turned the tide in favour of the Allies. The British positions were pushed back, in some cases many miles, and casualties were high among the defenders, and Private Rosenberg was among those who were killed.

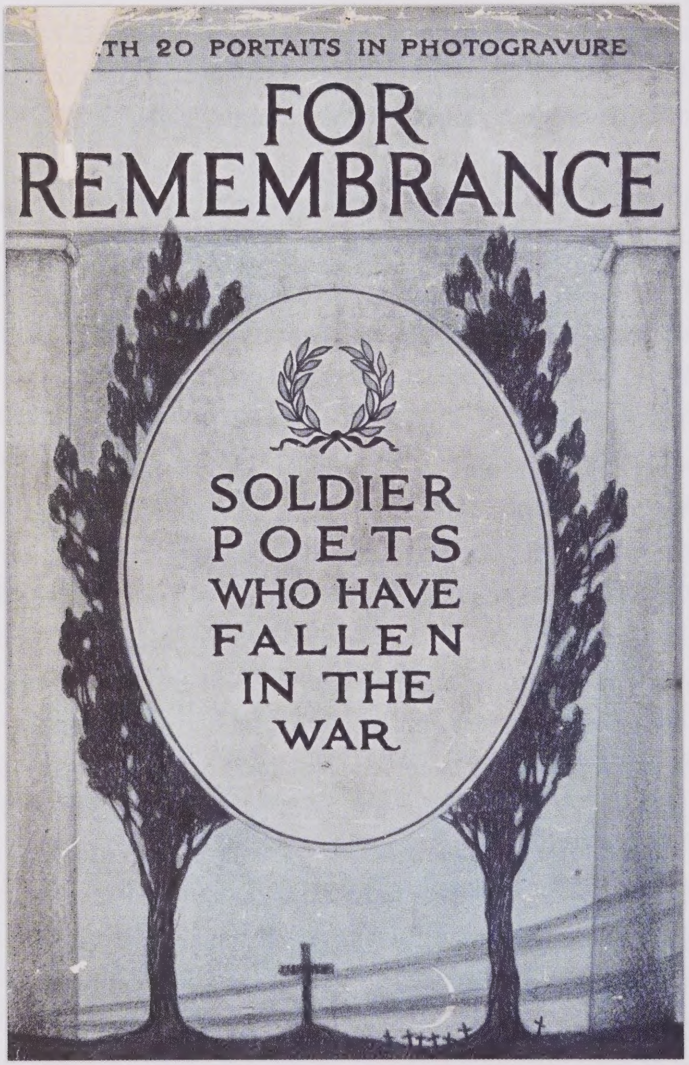
Rosenberg privately published two small works of poetry, *Night and Day* (1912) and *Youth* (1915), as well as a verse-drama, *Moses* (1916), none of which sold well. The 1922 volume of Rosenberg's poetry was edited by his friend, Gordon Bottomley (1874-1948), the Georgian poet, with the introductory memoir being written by another acquaintance, Laurence Binyon.

62. Arthur St. John Adcock (1864-1930). *For Remembrance: Soldier Poets who have fallen in the War*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918.

63. Frank S. Brown (1893-1915). *Contingent Ditties and Other Soldier Songs of the Great War*. Edited by Holbrook Jackson. London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1915.

Public interest in the soldier poets remained high throughout out the war. Individual poems by these men appeared frequently in newspapers and magazines, and their published volumes of verse were very popular, often going through several printings or editions. In 1918, Arthur St. John Adcock, an English journalist and editor of the monthly magazine *The Bookman*, and himself an author of war poetry, wrote about those soldier poets who had died or were killed in the war. As Adcock explained: 'I am not attempting anything of criticism here; I am attempting nothing more than to show in their own words what was in their hearts and minds when these men of peace, these civilians in grain, made soldiers of themselves under stress of necessity, and what was the real object of their fighting.' Of the forty-four men profiled in *For Remembrance*, some, like Rupert Brooke, Charles Hamilton Sorley and Edward Thomas, are familiar to modern readers; but many others remain virtually unknown. Two Canadians are included, Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae (1872-1918), the author of that most famous of war poems, 'In Flanders Fields', and Frank S. Brown (1893-1915), a sergeant with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Brown was killed in the trenches at St. Eloi, on 3 February 1915. His one book of verse, *Contingent Ditties, and Other Soldier Songs of the Great War*, was published posthumously in Britain later that year.

A revised edition of *For Remembrance* was published in 1920, expanding by thirteen the number of soldier poets discussed.



TH 20 PORTAITS IN PHOTOGRAVURE

FOR
REMEMBRANCE

SOLDIER
POETS
WHO HAVE
FALLEN
IN THE
WAR

Arthur St. John Adcock. For Remembrance: Soldier Poets who have fallen in the War.

Case 5

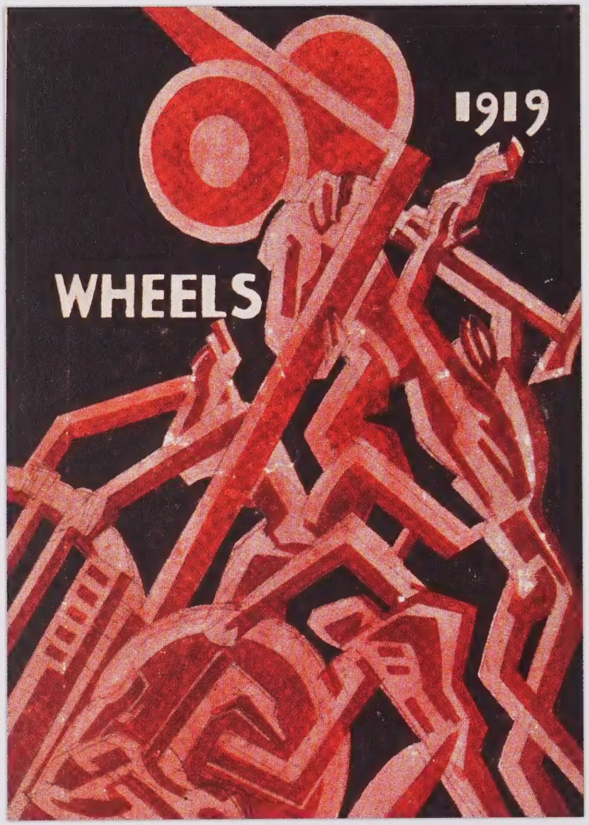
Wilfred Owen: The Making of a Reputation

Wilfred Owen is such an iconic figure within the canon of First World War literature that it comes as a distinct surprise to learn that only five of his poems were published in his lifetime. His poems now appear in countless anthologies and his name is invoked immediately when discussions about war literature arise. Yet at the time of Owen's death in action on 4 November 1918, a week before the armistice, his work was almost completely unknown except among a small circle of friends and family. The poems with which we are most familiar, 'Anthem for Doomed Youth', 'Strange Meeting', 'Dulce et decorum est', were composed between January 1917, when Owen first went to France, and the time of his death. Much of his finest work was undertaken between August 1917 and September 1918, a time he spent in England and Scotland recovering from the effects of shell shock. It was during his stay at the Craiglockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh that one of the more important twentieth-century literary friendships was formed, when Owen met Siegfried Sassoon, also a patient.

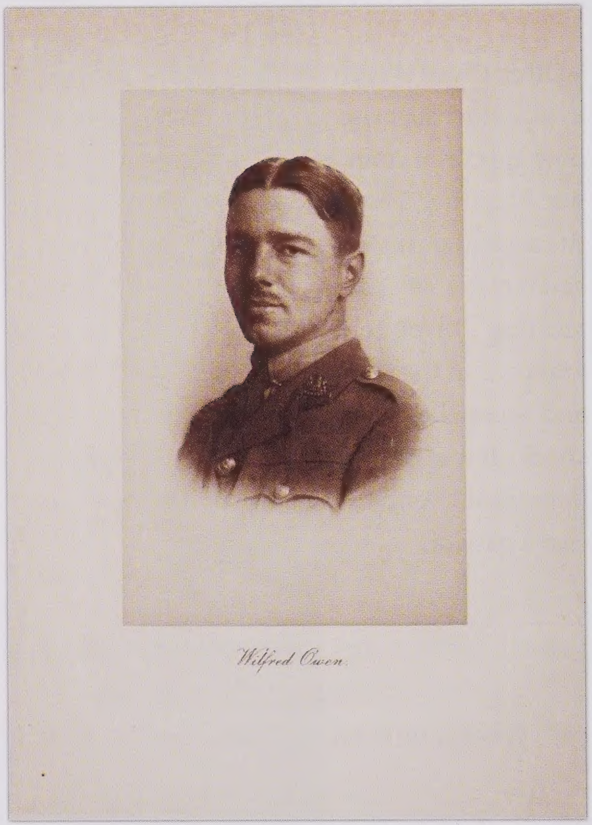
Early Published Appearances

64. *Wheels, 1919: Fourth Cycle.* Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, [1919]

Wheels, of which there were six volumes or cycles published between 1916 and 1921, was a modernist periodical poetry anthology edited by the poet and critic Edith Sitwell (1887-1964). In May 1918, through Sassoon's friendship, Owen was introduced to Edith's brother, Osbert. After the poet's death, Edith acquired some of Owen's manuscripts from her brother (Glendinning, p. 61). She sought and received permission from Owen's mother, Susan, to have her son's poems included in the anthology. In the fourth volume, which was dedicated to Owen's memory, Sitwell introduced


1919
WHEELS

Wheels, 1919: Fourth Cycle.


Wilfred Owen

Wilfred Owen. Poems.

his work to a broader audience through the inclusion of seven of his poems, most notably the powerful and deeply compassionate 'Strange Meeting', with its well-known line 'I am the enemy you killed, my friend.'

65. Susan Owen. Holograph letter to J. E. Wetherell, dated 29 September [1921].

J. E. Wetherell had written to Susan Owen requesting permission to include poems of Wilfred's in *Later English Poems 1901-1922*, his anthology of modern English poetry. In her reply, Susan provided some interesting biographical information about her son, proudly describing his dedication to his men and their loyalty to him. She also mentioned that their suffering, not his own, was what inspired Owen's writing. A single poem by Owen, 'Strange Meeting', was selected by Wetherell for the collection.

66. Wilfred Owen. *Poems.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1920.

The first book dedicated solely to Owen's poetry appeared two years after his death, Edith Sitwell again playing an important role in seeing the book to press. Sassoon provided a brief introduction, but it was she who sorted through the manuscripts and made the selections. In all twenty-three poems and fragments were included. The book was reprinted the following year with the addition of a single poem, 'The End'.

Important Editions

67. Wilfred Owen. *The Poems of Wilfred Owen.* A new edition including many pieces now first published, and notices of his life and work by Edmund Blunden. London: Chatto & Windus, 1931.

68. Wilfred Owen. *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen.* Edited and with an introduction and notes by C. Day Lewis. London: Chatto & Windus, 1963.

69. Wilfred Owen. *War Poems and Others.* Edited with an introduction and notes by Dominic Hibberd. London: Chatto & Windus, 1973.

70. Wilfred Owen. *The Complete Poems and Fragments.* Edited by Jon Stallworthy. London: Chatto & Windus; Hogarth Press and Oxford University Press, 1983. 2 volumes.

In the sixty or so years following the appearance of *Poems*, four important critical editions of Owen's work were published, three by fellow poets and the fourth by a noted literary scholar and Owen biographer. Together, these volumes confirmed Owen's reputation as the finest British poet of the First World War, made all his surviving poems available to the public, and deepened our understanding of his work. Each volume built on the efforts of the previous editors to create a more complete picture of Owen, the man and the poet.

Edmund Blunden was well suited to the task of editing Owen's poetry. He combined the sensibilities of a poet with the experiences of an infantry officer who had served on the Western Front. The edition he produced more than doubled the number of poems found in the 1920 edition. In an extensive and sensitively written biographical memoir, Blunden offered a compelling portrait of the young man and his development as a poet. Quoting extensively from the letters Owen wrote home from the front, Blunden connected his actual war experiences to the poems he composed. Samuel Hynes, the literary scholar, considers that Blunden's edition 'established Owen in the position that he has held ever since, as the best of the British war poets, and the model to whom later poets turned when war was their subject' (Hynes, p. 437). Jon Stallworthy, poet and also an editor of Owen's, has argued that Blunden's edition 'helped to consolidate Owen's reputation and elevate him to the iconic status he was to hold for poets and readers of poetry in the 1930s and after' (Stallworthy, *Survivors' Songs*, p. 83).

Cecil Day Lewis's (1904-1972) edition increased the number of Owen's published poems to seventy-nine. Divided into three sections – 'War Poems', 'Other Poems, and Fragments', and 'Minor Poems, and Juvenilia' – Day Lewis presented the most comprehensive collection of Owen's work to date. Identifying the location of all the available manuscript poems, he attempted to organize the various draft poems in the order in which they were composed. Day Lewis was impressed by the rapidity with which Owen developed as a poet, identifying his first tour of duty in the trenches as the point at which he came of age emotionally and spiritually. This new-found maturity was reflected in the poems he composed in the final months of his life. 'The subject made the poet: the poet made poems which radically changed our attitude towards war' (p. 12).

In his 1973 edition of Owen's poetry, using previously unavailable printed sources, Dominic Hibberd (1941-2012) attempted to arrange his verse in approximate chronological order. In addition to reprinting all the war poems, the edition contains a selection of his lyrical work and juvenilia, as well as extracts from Owen's letters, which were used to assist in dating the poems. Hibberd provided a brief biographical sketch of the poet and a short but useful analysis of the poems. Of particular value to students and the general reader were Hibberd's notes on specific poems, such as 'Anthem for Doomed Youth', 'Exposure' and 'Strange Meeting'.

Hibberd acknowledged that approximately half of Owen's verse remained unpublished. The poet and literary critic, Jon Stallworthy (1935-), embarked on an ambitious project to bring together into an orderly sequence all of the poems and fragmentary pieces. According to Stallworthy, the great difficulty facing the Owen editors was establishing an accurate chronology for the largely undated draft poems (p. xxi). His predecessors attempted to do this using internal evidence. Building on their work, Stallworthy went further, carefully examining the watermarks, and variations in size and texture of the paper on which the poems were written, matching the ink, pencil and handwriting, and comparing this information with Owen's dated letters to arrive at a more precise ordering of the poems.

Private and Small Press Publications

71. Wilfred Owen. *Thirteen poems.* With drawings by Ben Shahn. Northampton, Mass.: Gehenna Press, 1956.

72. Wilfred Owen. *10 War Poems.* Illustrated by Nigel Lambourne and Paul Peter Piech [Bushey Heath, Eng.: Taurus Press, 1974].

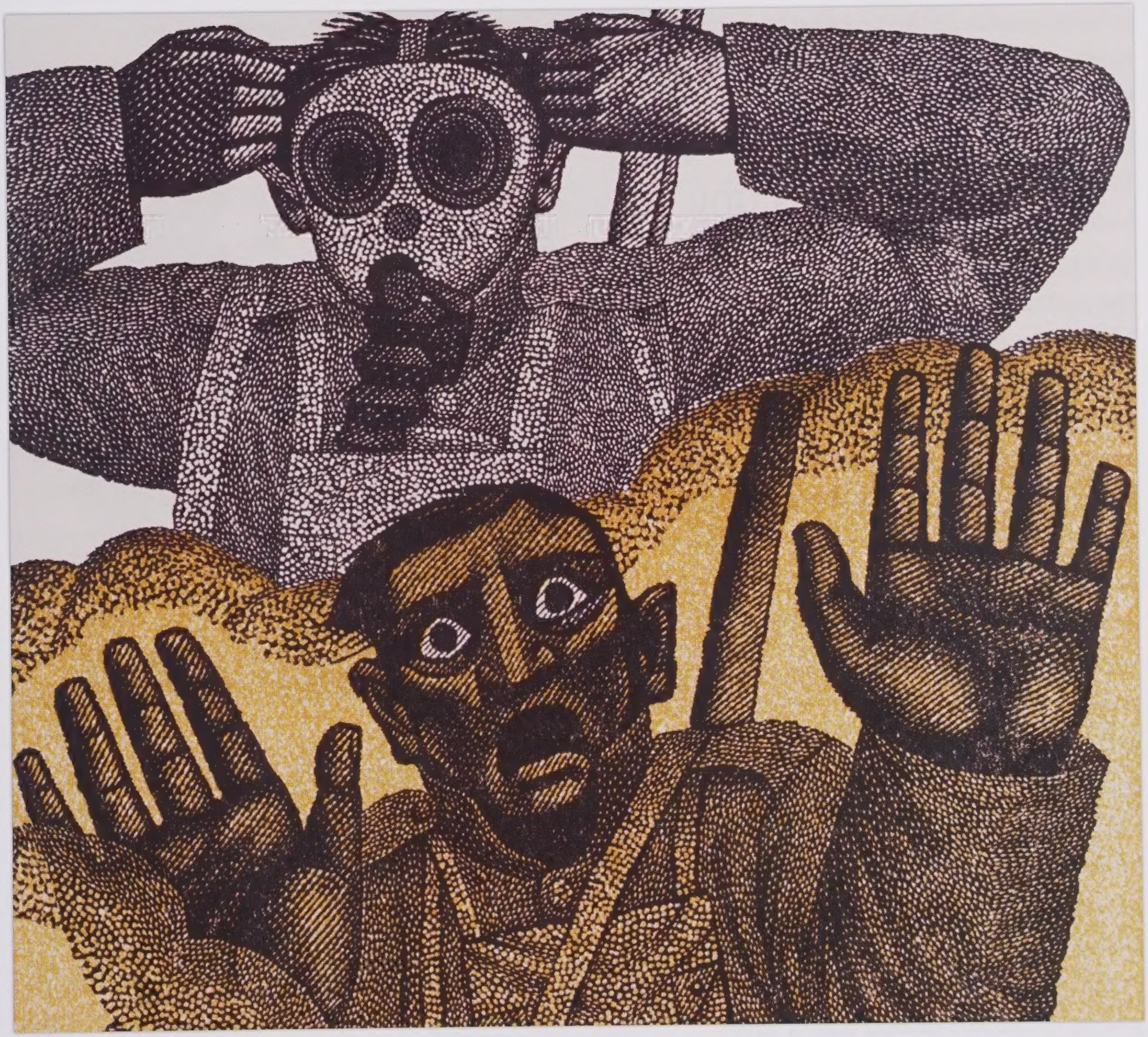
73. Wilfred Owen. *Anthem for Doomed Youth.* With two wood-engravings by J. C. Vidgen-Jenks. Bitteswell [England]: Ashby Lane Pres, 1982.

74. Wilfred Owen. *The Seared Conscience: Nine Poems.* With prints by Nicholas Parry. Market Drayton: Tern Press, 1993.

75. *Mapping Golgotha: Wilfred Owen: Letters & Poems.* Selected, edited and with an introduction by Jeremy Hooker; illustrated by Harry Brockway. Newton [Wales]: Gwasg Gregynog, 2007.

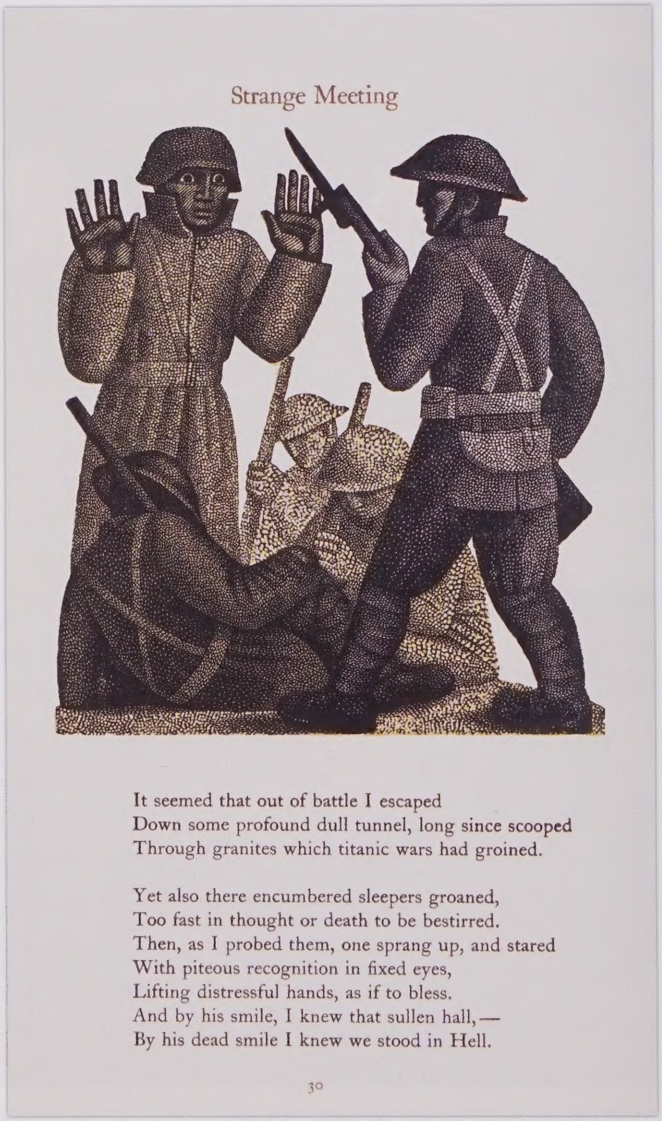
The passionate indignation and powerful imagery present in the best of Owen's war poetry has over the years attracted the attention of proprietors of several small and private presses in Britain and the United States. Often issued in very small editions, the books integrate Owen's words with specially commissioned illustrations to produce works that are appealing not only visually in the choice of the books' dimensions, typefaces, bindings, and papers, but also in the heightened emotional impact the images give the poems.

The first private press to publish an illustrated edition was the Gehenna Press, owned and operated by Leonard Baskin (1922-2000). It was one of the most important, long-lived and prolific American



Mapping Golgotha: Wilfred Owen: Letters & Poems. Selected, edited and with an introduction by Jeremy Hooker; illustrated by Harry Brockway.

private presses of the twentieth century. For its eighth publication, Baskin selected thirteen Owen poems, and commissioned his friend, the artist Ben Shahn (1898-1969), to provide the drawings. Four hundred copies were printed, of which thirty-five copies had an extra proof of the portrait of the poet, which Baskin had engraved on wood from a drawing by Shahn. Other presses followed the example of Baskin. Paul Peter Piech (1920-1996), an illustrator and owner of Taurus Press of Willow Dene, collaborated with fellow artist Nigel Lambourne (1919-1988) to produce the stunning *10 War Poems*, in an edition of only thirty-two numbered copies. J. C. Vidgen-Jenks selected a single poem, 'Anthem for Doomed Youth', and provided two wood-engravings to accompany the text. Nicholas Parry (1937-2012), together with his wife Mary, established Tern Press in 1973, largely to showcase his own art work. *The Seared Conscience: Nine Poems* includes an etching by Parry for each of the printed poems. *Mapping Golgotha* was printed by the well-known Welsh press, Gwasg Gregynog. In addition to the twenty-four



Strange Meeting

It seemed that out of battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which titanic wars had groined.

Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands, as if to bless.
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall,—
By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell.

30

Mapping Golgotha.

poems, a selection of Owen's letters to his mother, to Siegfried Sassoon and to Osbert Sitwell have been reproduced. The illustrator Harry Brockway (1958-) engraved the finely detailed images on Resingrave, a hard white epoxy resin engraving block; the colour blocks were then cut in linoleum.

The Friendship of Owen and Sassoon

76. Stephen MacDonald (1933-2009). *Not About Heroes: The Friendship of Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen.* London: Faber and Faber, 1983.

77. Pat Barker (1943-). *Regeneration.* New York: Dutton, 1992.

The personal and literary friendship of Owen and Sassoon continues to resonate with writers of imaginative literature. Stephen MacDonald and Pat Barker have used the story of the two poets' fortuitous meeting at Craiglockhart War Hospital to explore that friendship and the effect each had on the other's attitudes toward the war and, most importantly, to their poetry. What brought these two men together is well known. Shortly after arriving at the front Owen suffered a severe concussion, the result of having fallen into a fifteen-foot hole and hitting his head while out walking on a very dark night. Several weeks later, he was knocked unconscious after being blown into the air by a German shell landing near where he was sheltering. Experiencing symptoms of shell shock, Owen was sent back to England to recuperate, and then transferred to Craiglockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh for further treatment. Sassoon's path to Craiglockhart was very different. His anger at the senseless loss of life, and the failure of the politicians to negotiate a just and honourable end to the conflict, led him to write a public letter protesting the conduct of the war. Friends, including Robert Graves, fearing the consequences of his actions, convinced the military authorities that he was ill, and Sassoon was sent to the facility to 'recover' his health. The meeting between the two soldiers and poets took place on 18 August 1917 in Sassoon's hospital room when a rather diffident and shy Owen approached Sassoon to autograph copies of the latter's recently published work, *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems.* A friendship developed, and they remained in contact with one another after their release from hospital and their return to the trenches.

MacDonald's two-person play vividly portrays the unique relationship between the poets as it moves from the hospital in Edinburgh to the Sambre-Oise canal in France, where Owen is killed attempting to lead his men across. Although the conversations are invented, the playwright took great care to bring an element of veracity to the words by consulting published sources, including letters and poems. In a poignant speech at the end of the play, MacDonald has Sassoon say this of Owen: 'Of course, I've never been able to accept his loss. Too much of myself went with him.' In *Regeneration* Pat Barker seamlessly weaves fact and fiction into this compelling narrative of soldiers damaged psychologically by the war. Central to the novel is the real-life neurologist, Dr. W. H. R. Rivers (1864-1922), a pioneer in the treatment of war neuroses, and Sassoon's doctor. Rivers is also attending to Second Lieutenant Billy Prior, a patient so traumatized by the war that he is unable to speak. This fictitious character also appears in the second and third volumes of the trilogy.

Case 6

BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS

The British Perspective

78. Edward Thompson (1886-1946). *These Men, Thy Friends.* New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1928.

The entry of Turkey into the war on the side of Germany at the end of October 1914 posed a serious threat to British interests in the region, most particularly to the security of the Suez Canal and thus to the supplies of oil from Persia. In a move calculated to prevent any possible disruption in the flow of oil, troops from India were landed in Turkish-held Mesopotamia to seize the port of Basra and the surrounding area. The ease with which this was accomplished emboldened the military commanders to expand the scope of the operation by pushing their troops further north and capturing the town of Kut-al-Amarah, only one hundred and twenty miles from Baghdad. After these initial defeats, the Turkish army rallied, defeated the British at the Battle of Ctesiphon (22-26 November 1915), and then laid siege to Kut, which surrendered several months later sending approximately 12,000 British and Indian soldiers into captivity.

Edward Thompson served in the Mesopotamian campaign as a Methodist chaplain from 1916 until the end of the war, and was awarded the Military Cross for bravery under fire while attending to the wounded. His novel covers the last eighteen months of the Mesopotamian campaign after the front had devolved into one of stalemate, with each side constructing lines of trenches protected by machine guns and barbed wire. The story follows four officers of different military backgrounds – a doctor, a nonconformist minister, an infantry battalion commander and an artillery officer - who befriend one another. Together they participate in several horrific, but ultimately futile battles before British troops finally break through the Turkish defences and take Baghdad in March 1917. The two experienced combat officers, who have witnessed first-hand the callousness and incompetence of the higher military command in ordering attacks without proper planning and in failing to appreciate the quality of the Turkish forces, question the senseless deaths of so many of their comrades. As Colonel Hart, the infantry officer, laments, 'What had been the use of tossing down those thousands of lives?'

On display is the first American edition, which has been inscribed by the author. The English edition appeared the previous year.

79. Edmund Blunden (1896-1974). *Undertones of War*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1929.

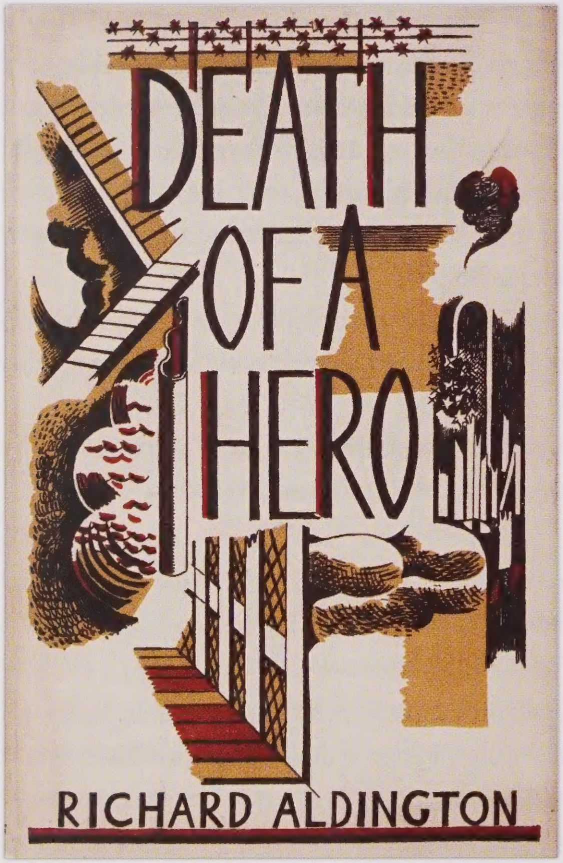
To his dying day the poet Edmund Blunden was haunted by the memories of his experiences as a shy and modest young officer serving in a British infantry regiment during the First World War. In sharp contrast to the harsh realism grimly presented in many of the war books published towards the end of the 1920s, Blunden's memoir seems more like 'an extended pastoral elegy in prose' (Fussell, p. 254). The consciously literary style of the writing and the lyrical passages in which images of the devastated war zones are juxtaposed to the natural beauty of the countryside, increase rather than diminish the overall sense of pathos. Blunden's penchant for seeing his circumscribed world with a poet's eye makes *Undertones* a truly remarkable piece of war literature. Three short examples illustrate his unique prose style: 'Over Coldstream Lane, the chief communication trench, deep red poppies, blue and white cornflowers and darnel thronged the way to destruction; the yellow cabbage-flowers thickened here and there in sickening brilliance.' Or: 'I heard an evening robin in a hawthorn, and in trampled gardens among the refuse of war there was the fairy, affectionate immortality of the yellow rose and blue-grey crocus.' And finally: 'Below, among mighty trees of golden leaf, and some that lie prone in black channels as primeval saurians, there is a track across the lagooned Ancre.' Throughout the story one glimpses the gentle spirit of the author, the man affectionately nicknamed 'Bunny' and 'The Rabbit' by his fellow officers. He writes with pleasure about his colonel who, on seeing a review of Blunden's poems printed in the *Times Literary Supplement*, is delighted that there is an author in the battalion. On several occasions he discovers books in abandoned houses and feels guilt when the urge to take them is too great to overcome. At no point in the book does Blunden mention the medal he was awarded for bravery, nor that he was seriously affected by inhaling poison gas. No bitterness or hatred of the Germans is voiced, and criticism of the high command and comrades is muted.

First published in Britain in 1928, the American edition followed a year later. Many of Blunden's war poems are published as an appendix in the book.

80. Richard Aldington (1892-1962). *Death of a Hero.* London: Chatto and Windus, 1929.

81. Richard Aldington. *Death of a Hero.* New York: Covici, Friede, 1929.

There are many parallels between Aldington and George Winterbourne, the protagonist in his novel *Death of a Hero.* Both men were middle-class – Aldington, a poet and writer, Winterbourne, an artist – and both served in the ranks on the Western Front before being granted commissions and returning to the fighting. They each held strong, unpopular views against the war and of life in the army. Their personal lives were terribly complicated and fraught with difficulties that affected them emotionally. And the two men were victims of war exhaustion, their nerves shattered by the ceaseless stresses of trench warfare. In the case of Winterbourne, however, his mental state leads directly to his death on the battlefield, one week before the war ends. As the narrator of the story comments, Winterbourne was 'a bit off his head ... he struck me as a man who was done for, used up.' In another interesting parallel, on the same date as Winterbourne is killed, Aldington's battalion took part in an assault on German positions and suffered forty-one dead and ninety-five wounded. A tone of bitterness permeates the novel, a reflection of Aldington's deep antipathy

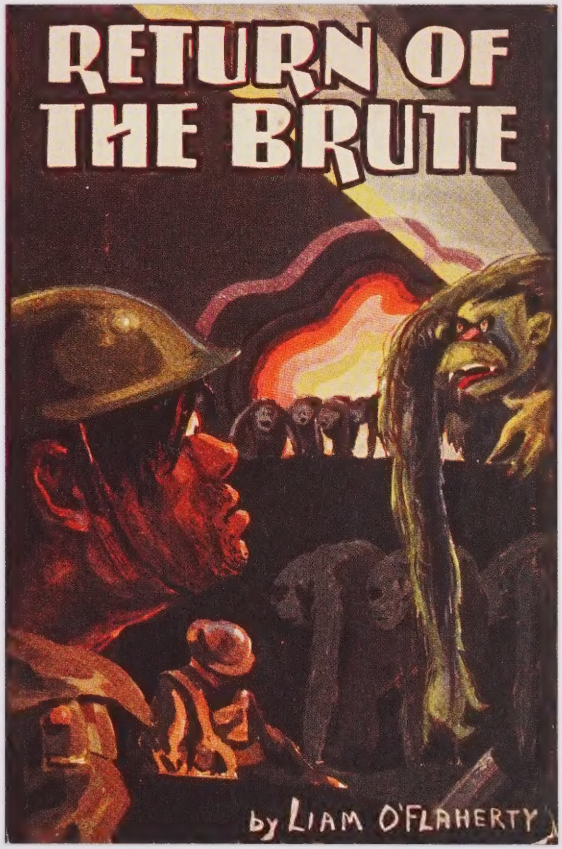


Richard Aldington. Death of a Hero.

towards the war. Again, the narrator is chosen to give voice to the author's attitude: 'The death of a hero! ... George's death is a symbol to me of the whole sickening bloody waste of it, the damnable stupid waste and torture of it.'

In the preface, Aldington wrote that he began the book almost immediately after the armistice was announced, but soon put it aside, and did not return to the manuscript for another ten years. The book, when it did appear in September 1929, was published in an expurgated form. As Aldington explained in a note to the trade edition, the publisher objected to the use of 'certain words, phrases, sentences, and even passages' in the text, and requested that they be removed. The author, in turn, insisted that asterisks be inserted to indicate where the cuts had been made. Among the offending deletions were expletives and passages of a sexual nature. Interestingly, American readers must have been less easily shocked because the American publisher, Covici, Friede, required fewer and shorter changes. The next year, Aldington issued a two-volume unexpurgated edition, published in Paris, although this did not restore the complete text either, leaving some swear words as they appeared in the trade editions (Pearson, *Obelisk*, p. 316). The first complete edition of *Death of a Hero* was not published until 1965.

82. Liam O'Flaherty (1896-1984). *Return of the Brute.* London: Mandrake Press, 1929.



Liam O'Flaherty. Return of the Brute.

This work of fiction by the Irish novelist and short story writer Liam O'Flaherty, who served in the ranks of the Irish Guards and was a victim of shell shock, is one of unrelenting despair and horror. Nine working-class soldiers are the focus of the narrative. They are members of Number 2 bombing section, part of an unnamed regiment, which is involved in an attack on the German positions. The date is 20 March 1917. The section, led by an overbearing corporal, is demoralized by the mud, hunger, rain, cold and constant working parties that are their daily lot. Private William Gunn, the main character, is a veteran soldier of two years' standing with a medal for bravery, but he is slowly going mad under the intense strain of life in the trenches. Tensions between Gunn and the corporal, which have been simmering for quite some time, push Gunn over the edge. On several occasions, he hallucinates that the corporal 'was becoming transformed into a hairy animal; a brute which he wanted to kill'. As the story progresses, one by one the soldiers of the section are killed, leaving only three men alive, the corporal, Gunn, and another private. Now completely mad, Gunn murders the corporal with his bare hands, and is then himself killed when he runs towards the German lines. The novel ends with the following sentence: 'No. 4048 Private Daniel Reilly was the only one of Corporal Williams' section who came back alive.'

83. Robert Graves. *Good-bye To All That: An Autobiography.* London: J. Cape, 1929.

84. Siegfried Sassoon. *A Suppressed Poem.* [London]: The Unknown Press, 1919 [i.e. 1929?].

The publication of Graves's autobiography in 1929 provoked the ire of both Siegfried Sassoon and his friend Edmund Blunden. The two men sat down one day and went through an advance copy of *Good-bye* and were infuriated by the distortions, the outright falsehoods and the general tone of the book, especially those sections dealing with the war. According to Max Egremont, Sassoon's biographer, Sassoon and Blunden annotated 250 of its 448 pages with corrections and various comments, some of them of a rather juvenile nature (Egremont, p. 347). This copy is now in the New York Public Library's Berg Collection (a second copy of *Good-bye*, annotated by Sassoon alone, is at Yale). Sassoon's anger was further fuelled by Graves's inclusion, without his permission, of a verse letter beginning 'Dear Roberto ... ', that Sassoon had written to Graves in the summer of 1918. Graves had also made comments of a personal nature in the book about Sassoon's mother that he considered inappropriate and an invasion of privacy. Six days before publication, Sassoon contacted Jonathan Cape, the publisher, threatening legal action if the offending passages were not removed. Cape responded by assuring Sassoon that cancel pages would be printed and inserted into the copies that had not yet been distributed. An unknown number of unexpurgated copies did reach the market, however, of which the one on display is an example. In the second state of the book, the pages are left blank where the poem had been; in the next impression, the text has been re-set and the blank spaces removed. Although flawed in terms of historical accuracy, *Good-bye To All That* remains a brilliantly impressionistic account of life in the trenches of the First World War (Graves, p. xi).

Shortly after the publication of the expurgated edition of *Good-bye To All That*, a pamphlet under the title *A Suppressed Poem* appeared, reprinting the poem that Sassoon had demanded be removed. The identity of the publisher and the exact date of publication are unknown. The pamphlet was limited to fifty numbered copies, with a portrait of the author on the front page, and four hundred and fifty unnumbered copies, without the portrait. Beneath Sassoon's name on all copies is found the following: 'Saul Kain says ... Good-bye to all that ... gravely.' Saul Kane was a pseudonym used by Sassoon.

85. R. C. Sherriff (1896-1975). *Journey's End: A Play in Three Acts.* New York: Brentano's, 1929.

86. R. C. Sherriff and Vernon Bartlett (1894-1983). *Journey's End: A Novel.* London: V. Gollancz, 1930.

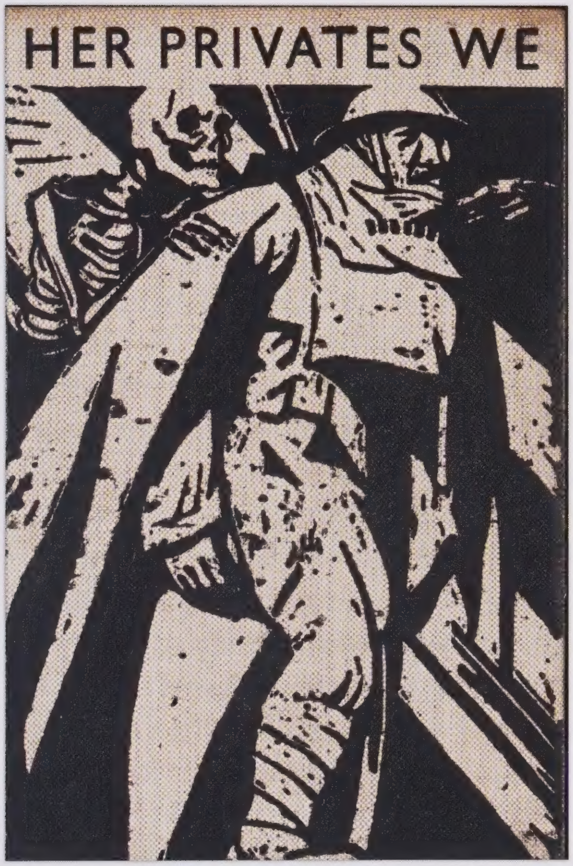
On 9 December 1928, a play about the Great War opened at the Apollo Theatre in London. Starring a very young Laurence Olivier in the lead role, the production was an immediate hit, and went on to run for five hundred and ninety-four performances. That play was *Journey's End* and the playwright R. C. Sherriff, an officer who had served on the Western Front and been wounded at Passchendaele in 1917. The entire play takes place in the British front lines at St. Quentin over a four-day period (18-21 March 1918), and in the dugout of the company commander, Captain Dennis Stanhope, a young but experienced officer, who is suffering from nervous exhaustion. The only thing keeping him going is whiskey, which he drinks in copious amounts. At one point Stanhope admits to a fellow officer, his friend Osborne, that he can't go into the front lines 'without being doped with whiskey – I'd go mad with fright.' We meet the other officers of the unit, three of whom have been in the war for some time, and the fourth, Raleigh, an inexperienced eighteen-year-old boy who has just arrived for his first tour of duty in the trenches. Raleigh, it so happens, went to the same school as Stanhope, albeit three years behind, and hero-worships him. To further complicate matters, Stanhope has an understanding with Raleigh's sister. The unnatural quiet of the front lines presages an imminent German offensive, and the officers are only too well aware of their chances of survival. Osborne is killed during a pointless raid of the enemy's trenches, and in the last scene, as the anticipated German attack begins, Raleigh also dies. The fate of the others, although not mentioned, is obvious.

Journey's End was first performed in the United States on 22 March 1929 in New York's Henry Miller Theatre. The year after the play opened, Sherriff enlisted the help of another writer and veteran of the Great War, Vernon Bartlett, to assist him in writing a novel based on the play.

87. Frederic Manning (1882-1935). *The Middle Parts of Fortune: Somme & Ancre, 1916.* [London]: Piazza Press, 1929. 2 volumes.

88. Frederic Manning. *Her Privates We.* London: P. Davies, 1930.

The Middle Parts of Fortune is arguably the finest English-language novel on the First World War – Ernest Hemingway, Arnold Bennett, and T. E. Lawrence, among others, praised its merits. The author Frederic Manning, an Australian by birth, came to England in 1903 with the intention of becoming a writer. Before the war he achieved a minor literary success with the publication of *Scenes and Portraits*, and also appeared frequently as a reviewer in the pages of several of the London newspapers and magazines. In October 1915 Manning enlisted with the Shropshire Light Infantry Regiment. Although his military service was marred by repeated offences for drunkenness, which culminated in the decision to resign his commission and leave the army, Manning did serve as a private for several months in the trenches, beginning in August 1916 during the later stages of the Battle of the Somme. This experience instilled in him a great respect and sympathy for his fellow soldiers, and an appreciation of their courage and capacity to endure the many hardships and dangers of army life on the Western Front. These sentiments would very much inform the book he was to write at the end of the 1920s, *The Middle Parts of Fortune*.



Frederic Manning. Her Privates We.

A story of ordinary soldiers on the Somme and Ancre fronts during the latter half of 1916, *The Middle Parts of Fortune* is told from the perspective of a gentleman in the ranks, a man by the name of Bourne. Bourne is educated, reflective, and possesses a certain detachment, often preferring to observe rather than participate in some of his mates' activities. Despite his being different, Bourne is well-liked and is viewed as a good soldier. On several occasions he is asked to apply for a commission, but he has no desire to exchange his life in the ranks for the privileges and responsibilities of an officer. Although there are battle scenes, much of the action takes place out of the line, with Bourne and his companions doing those things soldiers have always done: grouse, train, march, search for distractions and for opportunities to laugh. At the urging of Peter Davies, his publisher, Manning produced a manuscript of the novel in a very short period of time. First published in a limited edition of 520 numbered copies on hand-made paper, the book did not carry Manning's name on the title page. A year later, in 1930, an expurgated trade edition, which eliminated the profanity, appeared with a new title, *Her Privates We*, and under the pseudonym Private 19022, Manning's army serial number. His biographer suggests that Manning's decision to conceal his identity by means of a pseudonym was likely an attempt on his part to 'testify to the authenticity of what he had written and to pay the sincerest tribute he could to his comrades' (Marwil, p. 255). Within three months of publication, the trade edition had sold more than 15,000 copies.

89. Charles Edmonds (1897-1990). *A Subaltern's War.* London: P. Davies, 1929.

In 1919 and 1920, Charles Carrington wrote accounts of the Battle of the Somme (1916) and the Third Battle of Ypres (1917), better known as Passchendaele, which later formed the principal part of *A Subaltern's War.* Published under the pseudonym Charles Edmonds, the stories 'are simply records of everything I could recall, every action, word or emotion, in a vivid personal experience which I felt to be beginning to fade from my memory'. With the aid of his battalion's war diaries and confidential papers, supplemented by his own journal and the letters he wrote to his mother, Carrington's story begins with his enlistment at the age of seventeen in 1914, and ends with the armistice while he is in England waiting to return to the front. As interesting as his story is, and while the descriptions of the fighting are vivid and compelling, what makes the book particularly noteworthy is the epilogue. In these pages Carrington discusses, at some length, the tendency by certain commentators to speak of the disillusionment and disenchantment of that generation of young men who went to war in 1914 and 'lost their faith amid the horrors of the trenches'. This attitude was most prevalent in the then current literary fashion in war books, what Carrington calls the 'school of disillusion', whose authors allow for no redeeming features in the soldier's life, and fixate on the discomfort of the trenches, the mud and the cold, the filth and disease. Carrington has no patience for this emphasis on the negative view of the war, and argues that the 'legend' of disenchantment is false. He does not deny the war's awfulness - after all, he was intimately aware of its horrors - but the typical soldier, although war-weary, remained strong and determined right till the end. More than thirty-five years later Carrington revisited his war in a second memoir, *Soldier From the Wars Returning.* His views had not changed.

90. Siegfried Sassoon. *Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man.* London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928.

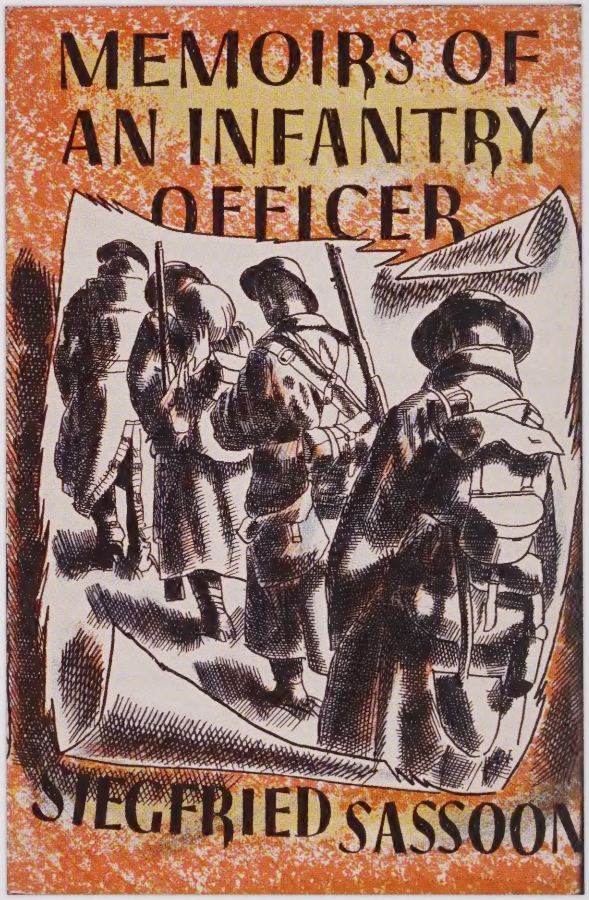
91. Siegfried Sassoon. *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer.* With illustrations by Barnett Freedman. London: Faber & Faber, 1931.

92. Siegfried Sassoon. *Sherston's Progress.* London: Faber and Faber, 1936.

93. Siegfried Sassoon. *Siegfried Sassoon Diaries, 1915-1918.* Edited and introduced by Rupert Hart-Davis. London: Faber and Faber, 1983.

In 1926 the poet Siegfried Sassoon began work 'on the obsessive autobiographical enterprise which was to occupy the rest of his life' (Stallworthy, p. 55). This task included the writing of a trilogy of autobiographical fiction (*Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man*, *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, *Sherston's Progress*), followed shortly afterwards by a further three volumes of memoirs (*The Old Century and Seven More Years*, *The Weald of Youth*, *Siegfried's Journey*). Much of the source material for the novels came from a series of notebooks or diaries Sassoon kept both during the war and afterwards. The editor of the published diaries, Rupert Hart-Davis, commented that a comparison of the novels with the diaries shows that the novels are 'faithful records of his experiences ... occasionally heightened but never distorted' (*Siegfried Sassoon Diaries, 1915-1918*, p. 9). Other scholars, however, have pointed out that many of the emotional complexities found in the diaries were 'simplified in the service of Sassoon's primary argument against the disastrous combat and the changes it brought about' (Watson, p. 237). Sassoon was aware that in his novels he was 'using the past to comment on the present, rather than trying to offer a "true" picture of the war' (Watson, p. 238).

The first volume in the trilogy, *Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man*, was published anonymously in 1928 and was an immediate success, selling more than 15,000 copies in just three months. No one was more surprised by the book's popularity and critical reception than Sassoon (Wilson, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 175). Most of the novel offers a nostalgic look at pre-war England, a seemingly idyllic world seen through the eyes of George Sherston. Similarities between the fictional Sherston and Sassoon abound, with the crucial difference that Sherston is not a poet nor does he have any literary pretensions. The war intrudes into this life only in the final two chapters, beginning with Sherston's enlistment as a trooper in a cavalry unit before he transfers to an infantry regiment. The narrative ends on Easter Sunday 1916, with him in the front-line trenches grieving for friends who have been killed earlier in the war. *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* came out in 1930 and continues Sherston's story on the Western Front. He takes part in the fighting on the Somme, is wounded the next year at the Battle of Arras, and while recovering in England makes a public protest against the war. Mirroring Sassoon's experience, Sherston's friends convince the military and medical authorities to send him to a hospital in Edinburgh that specializes in treating soldiers with war neuroses. The concluding volume of the sequence, *Sherston's Progress*, has Sherston returning to the front where he is accidentally shot by one of his own men. Lying in a hospital bed, Sherston's war, like Sassoon's, is over.



Siegfried Sassoon. Memoirs of An Infantry Officer.

The illustrated edition of *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* includes the Barnett Freedman (1901-1958) lithographed dust jacket, binding cloth, endpapers and plates, as well as his black-and-white line drawings. All three volumes were published in a single volume in 1937 under the title *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston.*

Case 7

94. Henry Williamson (1895-1977). *The Patriot's Progress: Being the Vicissitudes of Pte. John Bullock.* London: G. Bles, 1930.

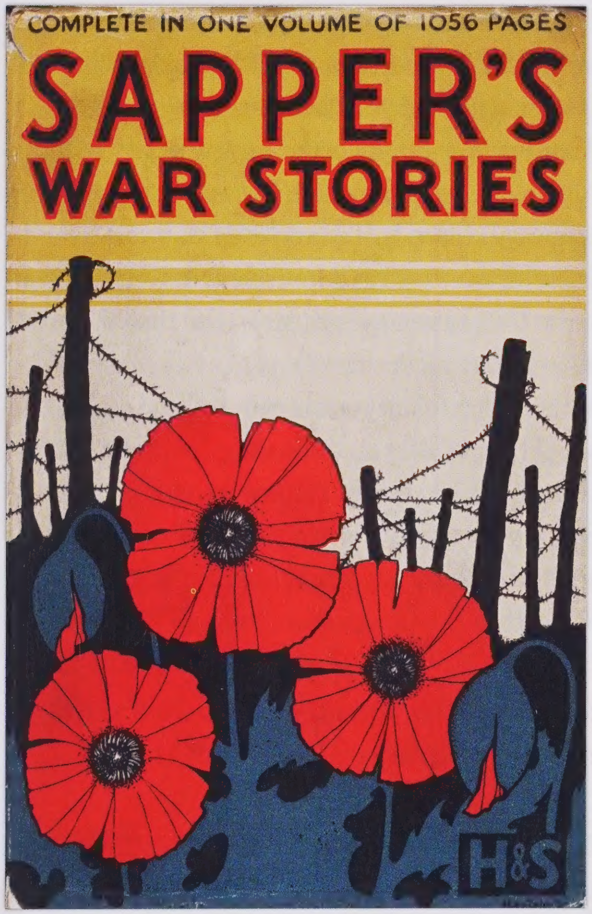
Like so many other young men of his generation, Henry Williamson went to war in August 1914. Of his life in the army, one experience stands out; namely, his involvement in the Christmas truce of 1914. Williamson's sense of wonder at meeting and shaking the hands of German soldiers in No Man's Land, exchanging small gifts and singing carols together, is evident in the letters he wrote home to his parents. The fraternization between enemies made a strong and lasting impression on Williamson, and the realization that German soldiers felt as deeply about their cause as did the English never left him (Williamson, p. 39).

The totality of Williamson's wartime experiences profoundly affected him, and informed much of his writing. In all, seven of his books deal directly with the war: *The Wet Flanders Plain, The Patriot's Progress,* and five volumes in the *Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight* series. *The Patriot's Progress* can be viewed, at least in part, as a morality play, and the similarities to Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* were intentional. The 'Everyman' (whom Arnold Bennett referred to as 'Everysoldier') in Williamson's narrative is Private John Bullock, and it is his so-called 'progress' that we follow through five distinct phases. Using short, staccato sentences to heighten the tension, and irony as an effective device, Williamson has Bullock's path lead to the horrors of trench warfare, the inevitable loss of innocence and the crushing of the human spirit. Bullock's story is not one of progression, but rather of descent into the hell of modern warfare; his journey ends not with redemption, only disillusionment.

In the preface to the 1968 re-issue of *The Patriot's Progress*, Williamson explained that the book grew from a suggestion from J. C. Squire (1884-1958), then editor of *The London Mercury* magazine, that he should write captions for a series of linocuts which illustrated the Great War. After several meetings with the artist, William Kermode (1895-1959), Williamson agreed to write an entire story around the images. The resulting book, published in 1930 in both trade and limited editions, is beautifully designed, with generous margins surrounding the text, drawing the eye to the simple but strong black images.

95. Douglas Jerrold (1893-1964). *The Lie About the War: A Note on Some Contemporary War Books* (Criterion miscellany, no. 9). London: Faber & Faber, 1930.

In reaction to the abundance of war books appearing in the latter part of the 1920s, both factual and fictional, that purported to tell the 'truth' about the war, Jerrold responded with this pamphlet exposing what he saw as the essential lie promoted by these publications. As Samuel Hynes has pointed out, although it is ostensibly a criticism of sixteen recently published war books, among them *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Death of a Hero*, which Jerrold identified at the beginning of the essay, he spent very little time actually discussing the works (Hynes, p. 452). Instead he concentrated on arguing against the notion common to all, essentially that of disenchantment, that the war was a futile, horrific event, and all the suffering, misery and desolation were without any meaning. Jerrold stated that the books reflected the illusion that the war was avoidable and futile, and that it was recognized as such by those who fought in the trenches. He made the important point that to the individual soldier all military operations might have seemed meaningless and without purpose, but this limited perspective, without a proper understanding of the larger context, distorted the reality of the situation. While for writers like Remarque '*every* incident and *every* tragedy seem futile, purposeless and insignificant', the real truth, Jerrold argued, could be found in the many histories and diaries of the war written by professional soldiers and those close to the events described that appeared earlier in the decade. 'The war of 1914-18 was a great tragedy because it was a great historical event. It was a great drama, because neither in its origins, its actions or its results was there any element fundamentally accidental or ultimately without meaning.'


COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME OF 1056 PAGES
SAPPER'S
WAR STORIES
H&S

Sapper. Sapper's War Stories.

96. Sapper. *Sapper's War Stories.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, [1930].

At the request of his publishers, McNeile collected and re-arranged into one volume all the Great War stories he had written. In the foreword he addresses the recent spate of war books that dwell on the horrors and nightmarish aspects of the conflict. For him, looking back to those years, he chooses to remember the pleasant moments – a perfectly cooked meal, the first night out of the line – but most particularly, the spirit of camaraderie, and of good fellowship.

97. Winston S. Churchill (1874-1965). *The Great War.* London: G. Newnes, [1934]. 3 volumes.

Churchill's classic account of the First World War and its aftermath, first entitled *The World Crisis*, was written from a unique perspective. Not only was he placed at the centre of power, formulating policy relating to the conduct of the war in his capacity as First Lord of the Admiralty and later as Minister of Munitions, but Churchill also served for several months as a battalion commander (6th Royal Scots

Fusiliers) in the front lines on the Western Front. The work was to a large extent a response to attacks on his reputation over his handling of the Dardanelles expedition, which took place in 1915. Using this personal view of events – Arthur Balfour famously called *The World Crisis* 'Winston's brilliant autobiography, disguised as a history of the universe' – and incorporating official documents and statistics, Churchill fashioned a highly readable survey of the war. Published over a nine-year period in six volumes, the title remains one of the standard histories of the war. The first four volumes covered the years 1911 to 1918, mainly from the British perspective; volume five examined the decade 1918 to 1928 and the impact of the Versailles Peace Treaty. The final volume was devoted to the war on the Eastern Front. In 1933 and 1934 an abridged and heavily illustrated version of *The World Crisis*, re-titled *The Great War*, was issued in twenty-six fortnightly magazine-style parts. The publisher offered to bind the issues together in a three-volume set, with the customer being given two binding options of either blue cloth or quarter red morocco.

98. Vera Brittain (1893-1970). *Testament of Youth: An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900-1925.* New York: Macmillan, 1934.

99. Vera Brittain. *Verses of a V.A.D.: and other War Poems* (Arts and literature series, no. 8). London: Imperial War Museum, Department of Printed Books, 1995.

Vera Brittain was the most prominent interwar spokeswoman for the idea of a lost generation, of a general decline in Britain, the cause of which was directly attributable to the deaths of so many men of superior quality during the Great War (*Letters From a Lost Generation*, p. 7). Her book *Testament of Youth*, first published in 1933, is based on the diary she kept between 1914 and 1918, and on the letters of four young men, all officers in the British Army, with whom she corresponded: her brother Edward (1895-1918), her fiancé Roland Leighton (1895-1915), and their two friends, Victor Richardson (1895-1917), and Geoffrey Thurlow (1895-1917). As the dates indicate, all these men died in the conflict. *Testament of Youth* became a bestseller in Britain and the United States, and remains one of the canonical texts of First World War literature.

In the spring of 1915, during the last term of her first year at Somerville College, Oxford, Brittain decided to give up her studies in order to become a V.A.D. (Voluntary Aid Detachment) nurse. The V.A.D. was an organization that provided nursing services to hospitals, primarily in Britain, but over the course of the war she nursed in England, Malta and France. In August 1918, a slim book of her poetry, *Verses of a V.A.D.*, dedicated to Roland Leighton, was published by Erskine Macdonald. It was reprinted in 1995 by the Imperial War Museum in its *Arts and literature* series. The volume also includes the war poems that first appeared in Brittain's book *Poems of the War and After*, which she had published following the success of *Testament of Youth.*

In the foreword to *Testament of Youth*, Brittain said that she tried 'to write the exact truth as I saw and see it about both myself and other people, since a book of this kind has no value unless it is honest'. In a study on the meaning of experience and memory in the First World War, the historian Janet Watson identifies many differences between Brittain's wartime attitudes as expressed in her diary and letters, and her post-war identity, seen in *Testament* (Watson, p. 248). This raises questions about how one chooses to remember or interpret events of the past, however recent and cataclysmic.

100. Stanley Casson (1889-1944). *Steady Drummer.* London: G. Bell & Sons, 1935.

In examining the Great War, most discussions focus on the events that occurred on the Western Front. Much less attention is given to the other theatres of war, in particular the Macedonian or Salonika Front, where the Allied forces confronted the Bulgarian Army for the better part of three years. In October 1915 an Anglo-French military contingent was despatched to the Greek port of Salonika to assist their ally, Serbia, in its fight against the invading German, Austrian and Bulgarian armies. In a case of too little, too late, the British and French, unable to prevent a Serbian defeat, retreated to the relative safety of Salonika. In his memoir *Steady Drummer*, Lieutenant Casson who had previously served and been wounded in the trenches of Flanders, describes arriving in the port city soon after the Allied withdrawal. Trained as a classical archaeologist, with an excellent knowledge of the Balkans and the Greek language, Casson was ideally suited for his role as an intelligence officer at British headquarters. Until the final months of the war the Salonika front remained largely static, neither side able to pierce the other's defences. Meanwhile, the troops had to contend with the harsh physical conditions of the country, the hot and dust-filled summers, cold, wet winters, and malaria-carrying mosquitoes; by war's end more than 160,000 soldiers had contracted the disease. Many of the men suffering from various injuries and illnesses were treated at No. 4 Canadian General Hospital, staffed largely by medical personnel from the University of Toronto. In mid-September 1918, a major Allied offensive was launched all along the front line, and a breakthrough in the mountainous western region by Serbian and French forces prompted a full-scale Bulgarian withdrawal and the subsequent capitulation of the country.

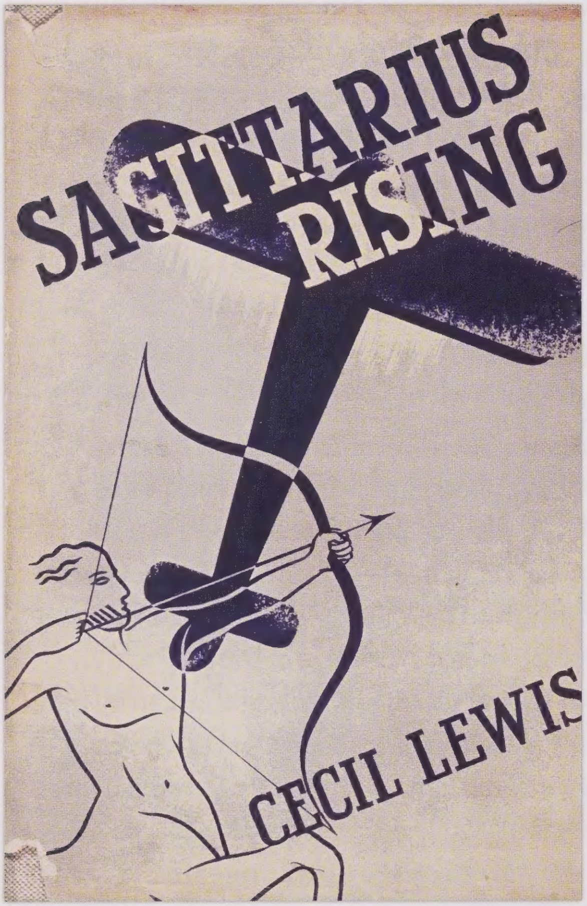
At war's end, Casson returned to the University of Oxford to take his M.A. degree. None of the men he had been at school with before the war had survived. As he notes in *Steady Drummer*, 'Oxford was trying so very hard to recover, but beneath the calm and sanity of those [college] dinners lurked the knowledge of all those dead men who should have been there too.' Casson found an escape when, in the summer of 1919, he accepted a post at the British School at Athens. While there, and at the request of Rupert Brooke's mother, he organized the placing of a tomb over the grave of the poet, who had been buried on the Greek island of Skyros.

101. C. S. Forester (1899-1966). *The General.* London: M. Joseph, 1936.

The writer, C. S. Forester, is best remembered as the creator of the fictional British naval officer, Horatio Hornblower, whose exploits of derring-do during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars against the French and Spanish has fired the imaginations of many a young reader. Forester, however, wrote numerous other novels, including at least four set during the First World War: *Brown on Resolution* (1929), *The African Queen* (1935), *Randall and the River of Time* (1950), and *The General.* The last named book follows the British military career of Herbert Curzon, from his experiences as a junior cavalry officer in the Anglo-Boer War to his promotion to senior command positions with the infantry in the Great War. A conventional officer, of limited intelligence and imagination, Curzon displays the attributes much valued in the pre-war army: bravery, strong discipline, energy, an iron will and determination to win through at any cost. The book is a thinly veiled indictment of the British military establishment and of the high command during the First World War, which as shown through Forester's portrayal of Curzon, was slow to adapt to the changing nature of war, reluctant to discard old tactics, and unable to appreciate the possibilities of new technologies.

102. Cecil Lewis (1898-1997). *Sagittarius Rising.* London: P. Davies, 1936.

Aircraft of the Great War, as seen in photographs, convey a sense of vulnerability, of fragility, of being held together with wire, glue and fabric, their brave pilots exposed in open cockpits to the elements as they gambol about the sky. Less than eleven years before the outbreak of war, the Wright brothers had made history's first recorded powered flight. Now, as the conflict developed, flying machines would come to play an ever increasing role in the military strategy of the armed forces of both sides. Young men like Cecil Lewis dreamed from an early age of learning to fly. The war offered Lewis just such an opportunity, and still only seventeen, he was accepted by the Royal Flying Corps for flight training. After the most rudimentary instruction (Lewis says one and a half hours), he soloed and was awarded his pilot's certificate. With a total of twenty hours of flying time to his credit, Second Lieutenant Lewis was posted to an operational squadron in France, where the life expectancy of a pilot at the front was only three weeks. Later in the war the military authorities lengthened to sixty the number of hours a pilot was required to have flown before he would be sent to the front. Throughout his narrative, Lewis captures the sheer joy he felt when flying: 'In those days I lived for the air. There was nothing in life to compare with taking a machine off the ground, wheeling away into the sky, trying turns, spirals, dives, stalls, gliding, zooming, doing all the stunts a pilot needs to give him confidence and nerve in a tight corner.' He also highlights the sometimes amateurish manner in which the war in the air was fought, such as carrying a twenty-pound bomb in his lap to drop on the unsuspecting enemy, or taping grenades



Cecil Lewis. Sagittarius Rising.

to the fuselage to throw at the Germans, only to have one go off prematurely, damaging the aircraft. Before moving to single-seat scouts or fighters, Lewis flew reconnaissance aircraft over the front lines, photographing enemy positions and providing artillery observation, which often meant flying below one thousand feet. By war's end Lewis was a captain with a Military Cross, and eight credited aerial victories. In later life, Lewis was one of the co-founders of the British Broadcasting Company, and in 1938, with George Bernard Shaw and two other collaborators he won the Academy Award for their screen adaptation of *Pygmalion.*

103. David Jones (1895-1974). *In Parenthesis; seinnyessit e gledyf ym penn mameu.* London: Faber & Faber, [1937].

In the introduction to the 1961 American edition of *In Parenthesis*, T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) spoke of David Jones as being representative of the same literary generation as Joyce, Pound and himself. He also noted that all four writers were altered by the war, but only Jones had fought in it. David Jones's war began in January 1915 when he enlisted as a private in the 15th Battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, the same regiment to which Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon belonged: three other members of the Royal Welch would pen important memoirs of the Great War - Private Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die*; Llewelyn Wyn Griffith, *Up to Mametz*; and J. C. Dunn, *The War the Infantry Knew, 1914-1919.*

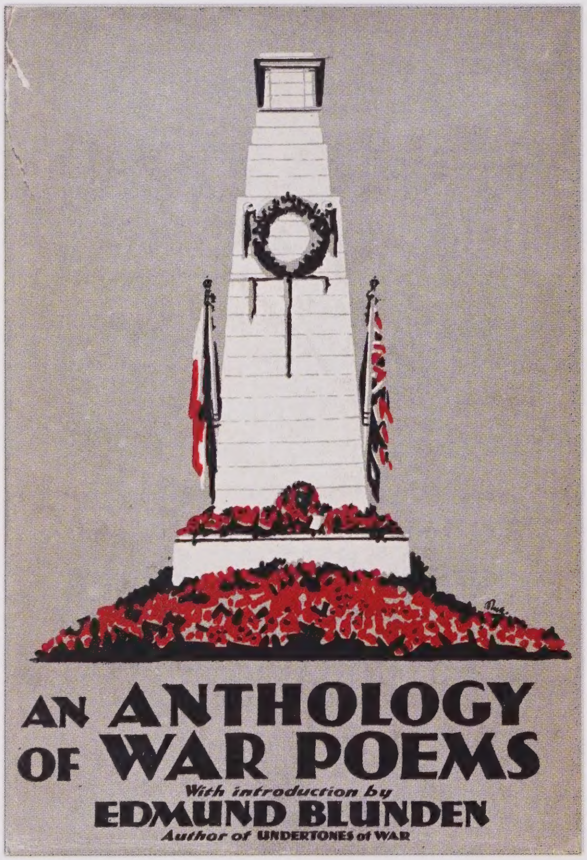
In Parenthesis is a complex, modernist epic-length poem of the author's experiences on the Western Front from early December 1915, the date Jones arrived in France, until July 1916 when, as he puts it, the character of the lives of the infantry changed. By this he meant that with the Battle of the Somme, the war seemed to become more relentless, more mechanized, and far more impersonal as the conscripted 'levies' replaced all the men who had been killed or wounded. Others sensed a similar change. Edmund Blunden, writing in *Undertones of War*, saw the issuing of steel helmets in place of the 'friendly' soft caps as a symbol of this change. 'The dethronement of the soft cap clearly symbolised the change that was coming over the war, the induration from a personal crusade into a vast machine of violence ... ' Literary scholars likewise view 1916 as a dividing line or turning point in the tone of some of the literature that appears at this time. A new reality, a new language is evident as writers, particularly those who had been in action such as Sassoon and Owen, attempted to convey the truth, in all its ugliness, of what they had witnessed. It is significant that 'virtually no poems that are in the canon – the war poems that are still read, and get into the anthologies – were written before 1916, or in the old high style' (Hynes, p. 153).

The copy in the exhibition has been inscribed by Jones.

Anthologies of War Writings

104. *The Red Harvest: A Cry for Peace.* Assembled and edited, with an introduction, by Vincent Godfrey Burns. New York: Macmillan, 1930.

105. *An Anthology of War Poems.* Compiled by Frederick Brereton. London: W. Collins, 1930.



An Anthology of War Poems. Compiled by Frederick Brereton.

106. *Armageddon: The World War in Lterature.* Edited by Eugene Löhrke. New York: J. Cape and Harrison Smith, 1930.

The editor of the poetry anthology *The Red Harvest*, Vincent Godfrey Burns (1893-1979), served with an American field artillery unit in France during the last year of the war. Witnessing the horrors of the battlefield, he vowed never again to kill and to do all in his power to prevent future conflicts. 'I gave my solemn pledge to God, over and over again, that I would do what little I could to end the war-system. I felt it a solemn obligation, a supreme duty to the boys who died and could no longer speak, to give my life-long influence to stem this tide of hate and anger which plunges whole peoples into murder, destruction and wholesale barbarism.' This anthology was one way of keeping that vow, by means of the 'poets' cry for peace'. Burns uses the introduction as a platform to express a heartfelt plea to end militarism and the attitudes that result in war. The poems selected reflect that ideal by demonstrating the futility of war, its unbearable losses, and the senseless destruction. Among the poets included are Sassoon, Owen, Binyon and Kipling.

In a perceptive introduction to *An Anthology of War Poems*, Edmund Blunden traces the evolution of British war poetry during the Great War from its early phase, with its emphasis on patriotic idealism, sacrifice and 'chivalrous obligation', best represented in the work of Rupert Brooke, to the later phase, where the verse becomes explicit in its descriptions of appalling destruction, the horrors of the modern battlefield, and the despair and outrage of the common soldier. These latter themes are most closely associated with the poetry of Sassoon and Owen.

The majority of the poems in the book were written by men who served during the war, but it does include civilian poets like Hardy, Binyon, and Margaret Postgate (1893-1980). Poems by two Canadians are reprinted: John McCrae's (1872-1918) 'In Flanders Fields' and Frank Prewett's (1893-1962) 'Voices of Women'.

The approach taken by the editor of *Armageddon: The World War in Literature* differs from that of the two poetry anthologists. International in scope, Eugene Löhrke's intention was to present the war in as broad a way as possible by including an array of voices with differing experiences and opinions. His focus was on prose writings, using excerpts from the work of over sixty writers. British, French, German, and American contributions from novels, memoirs and historical sources offer a substantially more balanced picture of the conflict.

Visiting the Battlefields and Cemeteries

107. *The Somme.* Clermont-Ferrand: Michelin, 1919. 2 volumes.

108. *The Battle of Verdun (1914-1918).* Clermont-Ferrand: Michelin, 1920.

109. *Ypres and the Battles of Ypres.* Clermont-Ferrand: Michelin, 1920.

110. Southern Railway. *The Battlefields and War Graves of France and Flanders: and how to visit them.* London: Printed by McCorquodale & Co., 1923.

Soon after the armistice, no doubt sensing a commercial opportunity, various companies began publishing guide books and offering tours to the battlefields of the Western Front and to the military cemeteries dotting the French and Belgian countryside. These services were aimed at veterans interested in re-visiting the places where they had been stationed during the war, but another huge potential market was the families and friends of those killed in the fighting. Michelin, the French tire manufacturer, which had issued its first motoring guides in 1900, came out with a series of illustrated guides to the battlefields in a uniform format. Dedicated to the memory of the company's many employees and workmen lost in the war, each book went into some depth describing the particular battle or battles, and setting out suggested itineraries to assist the traveller in planning his or her trip. Profusely illustrated with photographs and maps, the guide books were written, perhaps surprisingly, in a style devoid of patriotic sentiments, and with no overt expressions of rancour or recrimination against Germany.

The Southern Railway, with control over the routes from London to the Channel ports, was ideally positioned to offer its customers assistance in getting to and from the battlefields. Booklets promoting the journey as quick and inexpensive (third class return fares averaged 2 pounds 10 shillings) were made available, and also included detailed train schedules, both from London and on the Continent. For those wishing to visit the graves of loved ones, the booklet advised that the London office of the Imperial War Graves Commission be contacted before undertaking the trip. A list of the commission's offices in France and Belgium, with their addresses and telephone numbers, was also helpfully provided. The Imperial War Graves Commission was established in 1917 to acquire land for military cemeteries, to make provision to bury the dead, to maintain the burial sites, and to erect the monuments that were to be placed in the cemeteries.

Case 8

The French, German, Canadian and American Perspectives

The French Perspective

111. Henri Barbusse (1873-1935). *Under Fire: The Story of a Squad* and *Light*. Translated from the French by Fitzwater Wray. London; Toronto: J. M. Dent, 1929.

Under Fire (*Le feu*), by the French writer Henri Barbusse, was the most important anti-war novel to appear during the conflict. First serialized, and then published in book form in France in December 1916, it was translated into English the following year and won the prestigious Prix Goncourt. The book's influence on those beginning to question the war's cost and purpose was significant. Siegfried Sassoon seems to have read it shortly after the English edition came out in June 1917, just as he was making his own protest against the war. The book's contents most certainly fuelled Sassoon's growing anger about the suffering the front-line soldiers were enduring and the apparent indifference of the civilian authorities to end their ordeal (Wilson, *Siegfried Sassoon,* p. 375). Wilfred Owen included the title on a list of eighteen books he read while based at Scarborough with his battalion in December 1917, and adapted some of Barbusse's images for his poem 'The Show' (Hynes, p. 205). *Under Fire* is the harrowing chronicle of a small group of French soldiers set fifteen months after the declaration of war. The story begins peacefully enough with the men, first in reserve, and then in billets, some distance away from the battlefield. We learn the men's names, and something of their backgrounds and characters as they engage in behaviour typical of soldiers when not in fear of imminent danger: grousing, scrounging, eating, drinking, and on the lookout for female companionship. The final five chapters, beginning with chapter twenty-two, 'Under Fire', are the most disturbing and horrific, as the men descend into a man-made hell, the battlefields of France.

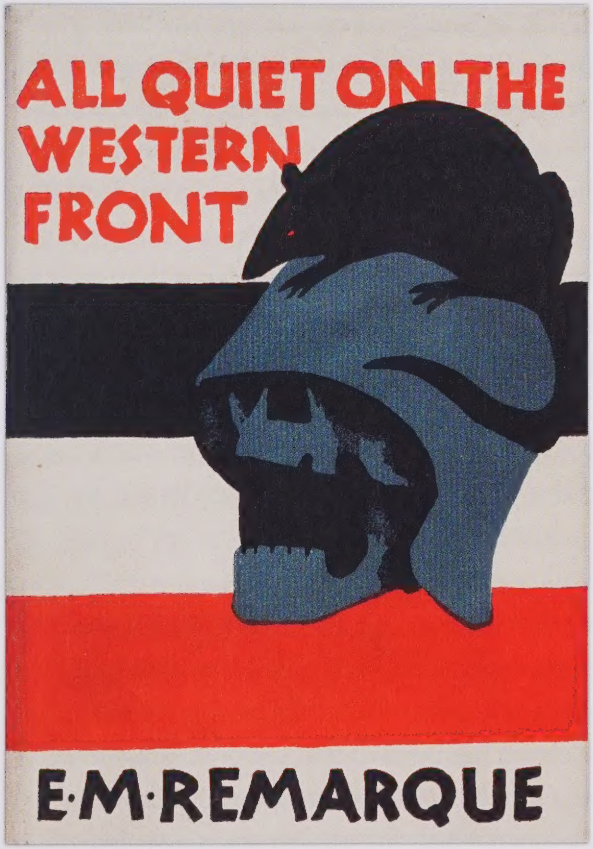
Included in this reissue of *Under Fire* is a second war novel, *Light* (*Clarté*) which Barbusse wrote in 1919.

The German Perspective

112. Erich Maria Remarque (1898-1970). *All Quiet on the Western Front.* Translated from the German by A.W. Wheen. Boston: Little, Brown, 1929.

113. Erich Maria Remarque. *All Quiet on the Western Front.* Translated from the German by A. W. Wheen. London: Putnam's, 1929.

Im Westen nichts Neues, better known to English audiences as *All Quiet on the Western Front*, is without question the most popular novel to have been written about the First World War. A global publishing sensation when the book came out in 1929, its anti-war sentiments seemingly struck a chord with the reading public in countries all around the world. Its grimly realistic portrayal of young despairing German soldiers, worn down by the unrelenting physical and psychological terrors of the trenches, and motivated not by patriotism or ideas of glory but by the simple animalistic instinct for survival, was a powerful statement against the evils of modern war. The historian Modris Eksteins has argued persuasively, however, that the novel became so successful 'not because it was an accurate expression of the frontline soldier's war experience, but because it was a passionate evocation of current public feeling, not so much even about the war as about existence in general ... ' (Eksteins, 'All quiet ... ', p. 362). Whatever the reasons, the book became an instant bestseller. In Germany, the initial printing of 50,000 copies sold out on the first day of the book's release, and the publisher, unable to keep up with the demand, was forced to employ


ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT
E·M·REMARQUE

Erich Maria Remarque. All Quiet on the Western Front. Translated from the German by A. W. Wheen.

outside printers and bookbinders. Within a year of publication almost one million copies had been sold in Germany. The English translation in Britain and the United States also did extremely well. The book did have its detractors, however. Some English reviewers took exception to what they regarded as the book's coarse and utterly bleak depiction of the soldiers' lives and their overriding sense of disillusionment. In Italy the book was banned by the fascist regime under Mussolini, and in Germany by the Nazis soon after they came to power in 1933.

The translator was A. W. Wheen (1897-1971), an Australian who served with the Australian infantry on the Western Front, and was thrice awarded the Military Medal for bravery. He remained in England after the war, eventually becoming Keeper of the Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum. A letter from Remarque, dated 10 March 1929, and offered for sale recently by Maggs, the London bookselling firm, suggests that the poet and critic Herbert Read (1893-1968) may have also played a role in the translation.

The American edition came out in June 1929, with certain passages removed because the publisher, Little, Brown, was concerned the book would be suppressed by the state of Massachusetts, and that the U.S. mail services would refuse to ship it. Among the sections expurgated were a scene at a communal latrine and one dealing with a sexual encounter between a soldier, recovering in hospital from wounds sustained in battle, and his wife. The second copy of *All Quiet on the Western Front* on display is the 19th printing (completing 260,000 copies) of the English edition, which was first published in March 1929 only two months after the original German-language edition. This particular reprint was issued in September of that year, a clear indication of the immense popularity of Remarque's novel. Interestingly, the dust jacket has the imprint of McClelland and Stewart printed at the foot of the spine.

114. Ernst Jünger (1895-1998). *The Storm of Steel: From the Diary of a German Storm-troop Officer on the Western Front*. Translated from the original text 'In Stahlgewittern' by Basil Creighton. London: Chatto & Windus, 1929.

George Steiner (1929-), the literary critic and essayist, has written that *The Storm of Steel* was the 'most remarkable piece of writing to come out of the First World War' (quoted in Nevin, p. 1). There is no question that Ernst Jünger's searing narrative of the four years he spent amid the carnage of the Western Front remains one of the classic memoirs of that conflict. Jünger volunteered for military service shortly after Germany's mobilization of her armed forces, participated in some of the worst battles of the war, was wounded on multiple occasions, and became the youngest recipient of the *Pour le Mérite*, the country's highest award for bravery. Based on the sixteen pocket-sized diaries Jünger kept while in the trenches, the book is written from the soldier's perspective. He evinces no interest in the larger issues of the war; no mention is made of the reasons why Germany is fighting, nor is there any discussion of wider military strategy. His focus is limited to his immediate surroundings ('the dead scenery'), to his comrades, and to the day-to-day struggle for survival in the mud and devastation he sees all around him. Unlike many British memoirs that emphasize the futility of war, Jünger is content to describe, in straightforward and often graphic detail, the carnage of the battlefield without interjecting any moral judgements.

At once exhilarated and yet horrified by battle, a ‘strange mood of melancholy exultation’ descends upon him when he goes up the line into the trenches. Jünger’s war ends in August 1918 when he receives a serious chest wound and is evacuated to a hospital in Germany.

115. Arnold Zweig (1887-1968). *Education before Verdun.* Translated from the German by Eric Sutton. New York: Viking, 1936.

Zweig volunteered for the German Army in 1915, and saw service as a private in France, Serbia and Macedonia, including several months spent at Verdun. Following the war he wrote a number of novels on the Great War, including the bestselling *The Case of Sergeant Grischa*, published in German in 1927. The central character in *Education before Verdun* is a young Jewish writer and barrister, Werner Bertin, now a private in a German labour battalion stationed in Verdun. The time is the summer of 1916 and the French city has been under attack since the Germans launched a major offensive the previous February. Sensitive, intellectual and gentle, Bertin is subjected to the overt anti-semitism and sadistic tyranny of his commanding officers and non-commissioned officers, who find ways to repeatedly ridicule and humiliate him. On one occasion, Bertin is publicly reprimanded in front of the 430 men of his company for simply showing kindness to some thirsty French prisoners of war by giving them water. Bertin survives all this and returns to his wife when the war ends. Through Bertin and other characters in the book, Zweig explores the dehumanizing effects of war, its wastefulness, brutality, and ultimately, its sheer senselessness. At the conclusion of the Battle of Verdun in mid-December 1916, the French had sustained approximately 400,000 casualties and the Germans 330,000 for no appreciable tactical or strategic advantage to either side. The German General Erich von Falkenhayn’s (1861-1922) plan to ‘bleed the French army white’ had failed.

The Canadian Perspective

116. Frederick George Scott (1861-1944). *The Great War as I Saw It.* Toronto: F. D. Goodchild, 1922.

117. Frederick George Scott. *In the Battle Silences: Poems written at the Front.* Toronto: Musson, 1916.

In spite of his age – he was fifty-three - the Reverend F. G. Scott volunteered to serve as a chaplain to Canadian soldiers two days before Britain and the Empire officially entered the war. Until seriously wounded at the end of September 1918 by a German shell, Scott spent the entire war ministering to the spiritual and emotional needs of the men of the First Canadian Division. Not content with remaining in the relative safety of the back areas, he regularly visited the front lines, exposing himself to the same dangers and privations experienced by the fighting troops. On numerous occasions Scott ignored intense shelling and machine gun fire to offer comfort and assistance to the wounded and dying of both sides. Although too modest to mention this in his book, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his bravery on the battlefield. Scott also suffered a personal tragedy. One of his sons, an officer in a Canadian battalion stationed near his own position, was killed leading an attack on a German trench during the latter stages of the Battle of the Somme. Unfortunately, heavy artillery fire in the area prevented his son's comrades from retrieving the body; it was buried where he fell. Several days later, under the cover of darkness, Scott went out in search of his son. In a moving passage, he described spending a considerable amount of time digging without success. He tried once again and spotted something white. It was his son's left hand with a signet ring on one finger, the only thing that could have possibly identified the body. Throughout the book Scott's devotion to and great respect for the Canadian soldiers with whom he served is evident.

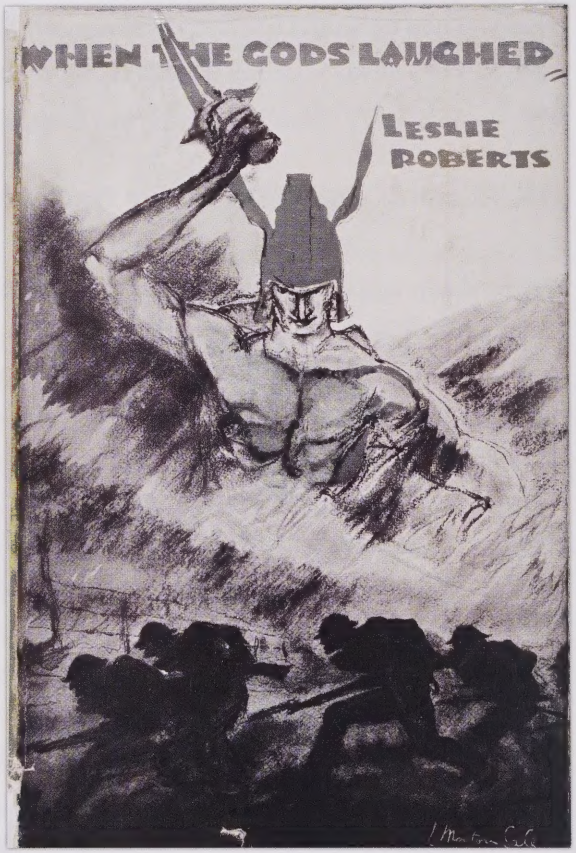
Scott was also a poet and published a volume of war verse in 1916 under the title *In the Battle Silences*. In a humorous anecdote told in his memoirs, he describes an occasion when it appeared the Germans might attack the Canadian trenches he was visiting. One young soldier asked Scott what weapon he would use to defend himself. He responded by saying 'I would recite one of my poems. They always put my friends to flight and would probably have the same effect upon my foes.'

118. Will Bird (1891-1984). *Private Timothy Fergus Clancy*. Ottawa: Graphic Publishers, 1930.

Will Bird saw active service in France and Flanders as a corporal with the 42nd Royal Highlanders of Canada (Black Watch), a unit composed largely of men from Ontario and the Maritimes. In *Ghosts Have Warm Hands*, an account of his war years published fifty years after the events he describes, Bird offers an intimate look at the life of an infantryman struggling to survive the mud, the vermin, and of course, enemy fire. Among the many anecdotes he relates, one in particular stands out. After an evening of installing barbed wire near the front lines, Bird shared a bivouac with two other soldiers. At some point during the night he was awakened by someone pulling on his hand. He looked up to find his younger brother, Steve, who had been killed in 1915, smiling and beckoning Bird to follow him. Dazed and confused, he hurried after his brother, only to lose him among the ruins of an old building. Unable to find him, Bird discovered that while he was away, the place he had been sleeping had taken a direct hit from a German shell. The two occupants were killed instantly, and but for the apparition of his brother, Bird would have been dead as well.

Drawn from his own experiences in the trenches, the novel *Private Timothy Fergus Clancy* follows the humorous misadventures of the title character, an Irishman in the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles, which he derisively calls the 'Dismounted Mudhounds'. A serial transgressor of army regulations, repeatedly in trouble with his superiors, Clancy is nevertheless a superb fighting man, who on several occasions singlehandedly kills or captures numerous German soldiers.

Will Bird. Private Timothy Fergus Clancy.


WHEN THE GODS LAUGHED
LESLIE ROBERTS

Leslie Roberts. When the Gods Laughed.

119. Leslie Roberts (1895-1980). *When the Gods Laughed.* Toronto: Musson, [1930].

This fictional love story, set against the backdrop of the Great War, follows the fortunes of Grey Thornton, a junior officer with the 35th Battalion of the King's Own Canadian Rifles, and Molly Tarrant, who drives an ambulance at a base hospital in France. Lieutenant Thornton, recently released from hospital after recovering from wounds sustained in the fighting, is suffering from battle fatigue and on the edge of a complete breakdown. Before his return to the trenches, he gives Molly a ring that had belonged to his mother, as a sign of his love and in proof of their troth. Once back in the line, Thornton begins to unravel and takes to drink 'until the ape of fear was stupefied and sleep came'. But when a superior officer discovers he is drunk and incapable of leading a raiding party, endangering the lives of his men, Thornton is charged with cowardice in the face of the enemy, court-martialled, and dismissed from the service. In disgrace, he is preparing to return to England when he accidentally encounters Molly, tells her of his shameful behaviour, and asks for the ring back. Molly declines, saying she still loves him, although 'I would rather be dead than know that I can love anyone who isn't a man.' With similarities to A. E. W. Mason's (1865-1948) *The Four Feathers*, Thornton, stung by her words, decides to re-enlist as a private and to seek an honourable death on the battlefield. Through a series of brave actions he is eventually promoted to lieutenant, the rank he had previously held, his self-esteem is restored, and he returns to the hospital where he and Molly are re-united.

The copy on display was presented by the author to J. E. Hahn (1892-1955). Major Hahn, D.S.O., M.C., served throughout the war with the Canadian forces, much of it as an intelligence staff officer, and wrote *The Intelligence Service Within the Canadian Corps 1914-1918.*

120. Charles Yale Harrison (1898-1954). *Generals Die in Bed.* London: Noel Douglas, 1930.

This novel of Canadian soldiers fighting and dying in the trenches on the Western Front provoked a storm of controversy when it first appeared in 1930. The book is widely considered to be the first

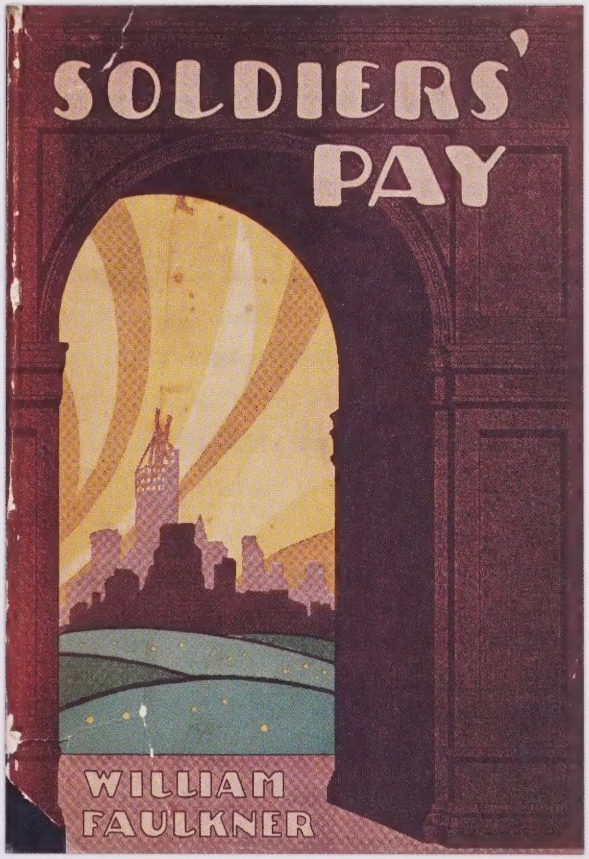
Canadian example of the anti-war fiction genre then in vogue in Britain, exemplified by works such as *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Death of a Hero* and *Return of the Brute* whose 'central theme was the brutalizing effect of war' (Novak, p. 60). Harrison, an American who came to Canada before the war, volunteered for the Canadian forces at the end of January 1917. Posted to the 14th Battalion (Royal Montreal Regiment) he was slightly wounded at the Battle of Amiens in August 1918, and shortly afterwards returned to Montreal. In the early 1920s Harrison moved to New York where he remained for the rest of his life.

From the provocative title, with its explicit condemnation of generals, to the final pages in which an emotionally charged and historically inaccurate claim is made that a British hospital ship torpedoed by a German U-boat was carrying war material, the book is unrelenting in its depiction of the squalor, horror and utter brutishness of life in the trenches. The narrator, never identified but described as a young man of eighteen serving in the ranks, and his fellow soldiers endure, as mere pawns, the lice, the lack of sleep, the innumerable working parties, the irascibility of the officers, and the intense enemy shelling and sniping. They 'are sunk in that misery which men fall into through utter hopelessness'. The day-to-day routine is broken by terrifying night raids on the German lines; on one such occasion the narrator is forced to bayonet an enemy soldier he encounters in the dark and claustrophobic confines of the unfamiliar German trench. Survival is the only thing that matters. At one point Harrison has the narrator say the following: 'We know what soldiering means. It means saving your own skin ... Camaraderie – esprit de corps – good fellowship – these words are for journalists to use, not for us. Here in the line they do not exist.' This sentiment, among others in the book, outraged veterans who valued highly the comradeship of the trenches, and argued that the emphasis, some might say overemphasis, on the negative and grittier aspects of the war was a misrepresentation of the true situation (Vance, p. 33). The passages describing the looting of Amiens by Canadian soldiers and the indiscriminate shooting of unarmed Germans were also much criticized.

The American Perspective

121. William Faulkner (1897-1962). *Soldiers' Pay.* New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926.

On 14 June 1918, William Faulkner walked into the British consulate in New York City, representing himself as an Englishman who wished to join the fledgling Royal Air Force (created 1 April 1918 by the amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service). Days earlier he had learned from an acquaintance that the R.A.F. was recruiting pilots in Canada. Faulkner desperately wanted to get into the war and had considered enlisting in the American military, but thought his small size and youthfulness would disqualify him from being accepted (Parini, p. 38). Faulkner's deception worked, and in early July he found himself in Toronto where the R.A.F. had established training facilities. Over the next several months, until the Armistice was declared, Faulkner went through basic training, such as drilling and marching, and more precise technical training in navigation, rigging, aerial gunnery, bombing and photography. This final stage of training before the cadets had their first flying lessons involved taking various courses at the No. 4 School of Military Aeronautics in the



William Faulkner. Soldiers' Pay.

grounds of the University of Toronto. Throughout his time in the city he maintained the pretence that he was an English gentleman, complete with accent, and provided himself with a plausible background. Faulkner was bitterly disappointed when the war ended before he could learn to fly and to serve in a front-line squadron.

Faulkner finished his first novel, *Soldiers' Pay*, in the spring of 1925, and it was published in an edition of 2,500 copies the following February by the New York firm, Boni & Liveright. The story centres around an American pilot in the Royal Air Force, Donald Mahon, horribly disfigured and with no memory of the past, returning to his father's home in the American south. Befriended by a soldier and a young widow who has lost her husband in the war, they shepherd the near blind and obviously terminally ill Mahon back home. It is not until near the end of the book, as Mahon is near death, that in a moment of lucidity he remembers the day he suffered his grievous injuries. The irony in the title becomes apparent as the story develops and moves to its sad conclusion.

122. Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961). *A Farewell to Arms.* With illustrations by Daniel Rasmusson. New York: C. Scribner's, 1948.

123. Ernest Hemingway. *A Farewell to Arms* (The Hemingway library edition). Edited with an introduction by Seán Hemingway. New York: Scribner, 2012.

Hemingway began the first draft of his novel *A Farewell to Arms* in the early months of 1928, and by the spring of the following year he had completed the final version. The book's appearance shortly before the New York stock market crash in October 1929 did not affect sales; more than 50,000 copies were sold within two months of publication. *A Farewell to Arms* is the tragic love story of an American ambulance driver on the Italian front during the First World War, and his love for an attractive English nurse he encounters there. The protagonist, Lieutenant Frederic Henry of the Red Cross, is at the front when the Austrian-German army break through the Italian lines during the Battle of Caporetto, forcing the Italians to withdraw. In the ensuing confusion of the retreat, Henry deserts and returns to his now pregnant love, Elizabeth. They escape to Switzerland where Elizabeth delivers a stillborn infant and dies hours later. Some of what Hemingway wrote is based on his own, albeit brief, experiences in Italy during the war: the eighteen-year-old Hemingway did drive an ambulance for the Red Cross in June 1918, he was wounded in the leg the next month while working near the front lines with a mobile canteen service, and he did fall in love with a nurse, although she was American, not English. Much of the novel's content, however, was a result of the research Hemingway conducted and, of course, his own imaginative powers.

The first illustrated edition of *A Farewell to Arms* was published in 1948, with drawings by the American artist, Daniel Rasmusson. In the 2012 Hemingway library edition, the publisher has collected all thirty-nine alternate endings the author wrote before he chose the lines that finally satisfied him. Hemingway also considered more than forty possible titles before settling on *A Farewell to Arms*. The title he eventually selected was taken from a sixteenth-century poem by George Peele (Hemingway, p. xix). Among the titles rejected were *The Retreat from Italy*, *Patriots Progress*, *Love in War* and *The Sentimental Education*. A complete list of the rejected titles appears in an appendix to the 2012 edition of the novel.

124. Elliott White Springs (1896-1959). *War Birds: Diary of an Unknown Aviator*. New York: George H. Doran, 1926.

Purportedly based on the diary of John McGavock Grider, an American pilot who was killed in action in 1918 while serving with the Royal Flying Corps (R.F.C.), the book was actually written by Elliott White Springs. Springs used his own letters home to his family (published in 2012 by the University of South Carolina Press), as well as letters and diaries from other sources, including Grider' diary, to create this novel of the air war in the skies over northern France and Belgium. An ace in his own right with several enemy aircraft to his credit, Springs, like Grider, began his military flying career with the R.F.C. His squadron commander was the legendary Canadian, Billy Bishop. Springs later transferred to the U.S. Air Service.

The artist responsible for the attractive illustrations, Clayton Knight (1891-1969), was an American who also flew with the British during the First World War. In 1918 his aircraft was shot down and he was taken prisoner. After the war he specialized in aviation art.

125. Wendell Westover (1896-1960). *Suicide Battalions.* New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1929.

This memoir follows the fortunes of a machine gun battalion in the American Expeditionary Force, from its formation in Syracuse, New York at the end of September 1917 to the battlefields of Europe. The author, an officer with one of the battalion companies, describes in some detail the specialized training the unit undertook soon after its arrival in France to prepare it for the particular requirements of trench warfare. Training alongside French soldiers, the Americans learned valuable lessons from these seasoned veterans of the Western Front. Six months after sailing out of New York harbour, its training complete, the company received orders to proceed to the front. In dramatic fashion, Westover recounts the large-scale German spring offensives that the enemy gambled would break the stalemate, the ensuing battles which stopped the German advance, and the final months leading to victory. As the cease-fire is called, bringing the war to an end, a silence descends on the front lines. 'There is no cheering. These men have fought for months. They are tired, nerves numbed, hearts saddened, souls deadened.'

The forty-six striking illustrations in the book are by Lucien Jonas (1880-1947), an official French war artist.

126. E. Alexander Powell (1879-1957). *Slanting Lines of Steel.* New York: Macmillan, 1933.

Although the United States remained neutral when war broke out between the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy) and the Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia), interest on the part of the American public in the events unfolding in Europe was understandably intense. As E. Alexander Powell wrote in his autobiography, *Slanting Lines of Steel*, within hours of the outbreak of war, 'editors of every great daily in New York were besieged by war correspondents and would-be war correspondents pleading for an opportunity to cover the mighty conflict...' Powell was among their number; he immediately signed on with the *New York World* and took passage on a ship bound for Belgium. His despatches were soon syndicated, appearing in other American publications and in the English newspaper, the *Daily Mail.* Over the next three years Powell and other American correspondents, such as Richard Harding Davis (1864-1916) and Frederick Palmer (1873-1958), would file detailed and highly descriptive accounts from the different war fronts, reporting often under dangerous and difficult circumstances, and subject to military censorship. Powell's vivid stories of experiencing first-hand an early aerial bombardment of Antwerp by a Zeppelin dirigible, of watching an attack by German infantry on Belgian positions and its bloody aftermath, and of the devastation of towns and villages wrought by heavy artillery fire, brought home to his American readers the terrible effects of the war. His reports also formed the basis of a number of successful books published by Scribner's, among them *Fighting in Flanders* (1914), *Vive la France!* (1915), and *Italy at War and the Allies in the West* (1917). Upon America's entry into the war in April 1917, Powell chose to return home and enlist. He returned to France as an officer in U.S. military intelligence.

Maclean-Hunter Reading Room

127. T. E. Lawrence (1888-1935). *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph.* [S.l. : s.n.], 1926.

For many people the image they have of T. E. Lawrence is based on that one created by David Lean's 1962 epic Academy award-winning film *Lawrence of Arabia.* Who can forget the scene of Lawrence, portrayed by the Irish actor Peter O'Toole, emerging like a mirage from the shimmering desert? While it does take liberties, the movie sets out the basic facts of Lawrence's activities during the war, which Lawrence himself describes in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, where he gives an account of his involvement in the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire. *Seven Pillars* has an intriguing and complicated publishing history. Lawrence first began work on the book in 1919 while he was in

Paris attending the peace conference; but the manuscript was lost, or possibly stolen, later that year in the Reading railway station. A second and third draft quickly followed, and it was at this point in 1922 that Lawrence decided for 'security's sake' to have the text privately printed. Of this Oxford 1922 text, only a few copies were printed for him (the first trade edition of this text was not published until 1997 when Castle Hill Press, owned and operated by Jeremy Wilson, Lawrence's official biographer, issued it in a three-volume set). Urged on by friends like George Bernard Shaw to make the text more readily available, Lawrence issued a shorter version of the 1922 text as a Subscribers' Edition in December 1926 and January 1927. According to one source, 211 copies were printed, of which 170 were complete (Hodgson, p. 5). A number of prominent British artists, among them Eric Kennington (1888-1960), Augustus John (1878-1961), William Nicholson (1872-1949), Paul Nash (1889-1946) and William Rothenstein (1872-1945), were commissioned to provide images for the book. In all, 125 illustrations, the majority of them in colour, were interleaved in the text. In addition, seven bookbinding firms were employed, and remarkably each copy has a different binding. One hundred and twenty-seven subscribers paid thirty guineas each for the privilege of owning the book. Unfortunately for Lawrence, the money raised through the subscriptions did not begin to cover his costs, so later in 1927 he agreed reluctantly to have a rather unsatisfactory abridged edition, *Revolt in the Desert*, published commercially, to raise the funds to pay his debts. Following his death in 1935 in a motorcycle accident, a trade edition of the Subscribers' Edition was published by Jonathan Cape in England and George H. Doran in the United States. The book was an immediate bestseller on both sides of the Atlantic and remains in print.

The copy of the Subscribers' Edition in the exhibition is on loan from the E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria University in the University of Toronto.

AFTER 1945

In 1978 Catherine Reilly compiled a bibliography of First World War poetry and verse written by those who lived through the conflict, in which she identified no fewer than 2,225 British poets, male and female, servicemen and civilians. Reilly listed a further 565 war poets of other English-speaking nations in an appendix. A recent survey of Canadian publications by men and women who served in the war listed 1,885 items written by 968 authors; included in this total were books, magazine and journal articles, novels and poetry (Tennyson, p. xvii). Dagmar Novak's study on the Canadian novel in two world wars noted that over forty works of fiction by soldiers and non-combatants had appeared by the end of the 1930s, although there are some curious omissions. And Hugh Cecil has estimated that 400 works of British war fiction, including plays and boys' thriller stories, were published in the period between 1918 and 1939 (Cecil, 'British war novelists', p. 801). With the advent of the Second World War, interest in the 1914-1918 conflict waned, however, and remained low until the early 1960s, when the years leading to the 50th anniversary commemorating the outbreak of the First World War saw a renewal of publishing activity on its history and literature. In the following decades a new generation of writers of imaginative fiction and poetry began using the Great War as inspiration for their work, particularly in Canada and Britain. Setting their stories in the war or in the years soon after its end, many contemporary novelists people their work with characters who are profoundly affected by the war and who struggle to cope with physical and psychological wounds in a postwar world they no longer know or understand. Of the many fine novels written by Canadians over the past forty years, arguably the best known Canadian novel is Timothy Findley's *The Wars*, published in 1977. Among more recent works Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road*, based on a true story and with an aboriginal Canadian as the protagonist, has rightly garnered international critical acclaim. British authors also continue to re-imagine the Great War through fiction and poetry. Pat Barker's *Regeneration* trilogy examines the effects of the war on the human mind and the treatment of resulting psychoses; and William Boyd sets his novel, *An Ice-Cream War*, during the little-known East African campaign. New readers who may not have been interested in traditional literature are drawn to graphic novels, which cleverly combine text with interesting and dramatic images. One hundred years on, writers of every genre continue to mine the seemingly limitless source of inspiration that is the First World War.

Australian/New Zealand Writers

128. Thomas Keneally (1935-). *Gossip From the Forest.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976.

129. David Malouf (1934-). *Fly Away Peter.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1982.

130. Alan Loney (1940-). *Gallipoli.* Mission, B.C.: Barbarian Press, 2005.

American Writers

131. Jack D. Hunter (1921-2009). *The Blue Max.* New York: E. P. Dutton, 1964.

132. Charles Todd. *A Test of Wills.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

133. Harry Turtledove (1949-). *The Great War: American Front.* New York: Ballantine, 1998.

Russian Writers

134. Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008). *August 1914.* Translated by Michael Glenny. London: Bodley Head, 1972.

French Writers

135. Sébastien Japrisot (1931-2003). *A Very Long Engagement.* Translated by Linda Coverdale. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1993.

136. Jean Echenoz (1947-). *1914: A Novel.* Translated from the French by Linda Coverdale. New York: New Press, 2014.

Canadian Writers

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138. Donald Lamont Jack (1924-2003). *Three Cheers for Me: The Journals of Bartholomew Bandy, volume one.* Revised edition. Toronto: Doubleday Canada; New York: Doubleday, 1973.

139. Timothy Findley (1930-2002). *The Wars.* Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1977.

140. William Stevenson (1924-2013). *The Ghosts of Africa.* Toronto: Macmillan, 1980.

141. Robert MacNeil (1931-). *Burden of Desire.* New York: Doubleday, 1992.

142. Kevin Major (1949-). *No Man's Land.* Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1995.

143. Alan Cumyn (1960-). *The Sojourn.* Toronto: M&S, 2003.

144. Joseph Boyden (1966-). *Three Day Road: A Novel.* Toronto: Viking Canada, 2005.

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British/Irish Writers

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147. Susan Hill (1942-). *Strange Meeting*. New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972.

148. William Boyd (1952-). *An Ice-Cream War*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1982.

149. Reginald Hill (1936-2012). *No Man's Land*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985.

150. Sebastian Faulks (1953-). *Birdsong*. New York: Random House, 1993.

151. Sebastian Barry (1955-). *A Long Long Way*. New York: Viking, 2005.

152. Ben Elton (1959-). *The First Casualty*. London: Bantam Press, 2005.

153. Oliver Lansley (1981-). *The Trench*. London: Oberon Books, 2012.

154. Pat Barker (1943-). *Toby's Room*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 2012.

155. Alex Gwyther. *Our Friends, The Enemy*. London: Oberon Books, 2014.

156. Jenny Lewis (1943-). *Taking Mesopotamia*. Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2014.

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157. *Anthem for Doomed Youth: Poets of the Great War.* Edited and introduced by Lyn Macdonald. London: Folio Society, 2000.

158. *1914: Poetry Remembers.* Edited by Carol Ann Duffy. London: Faber and Faber, 2013.

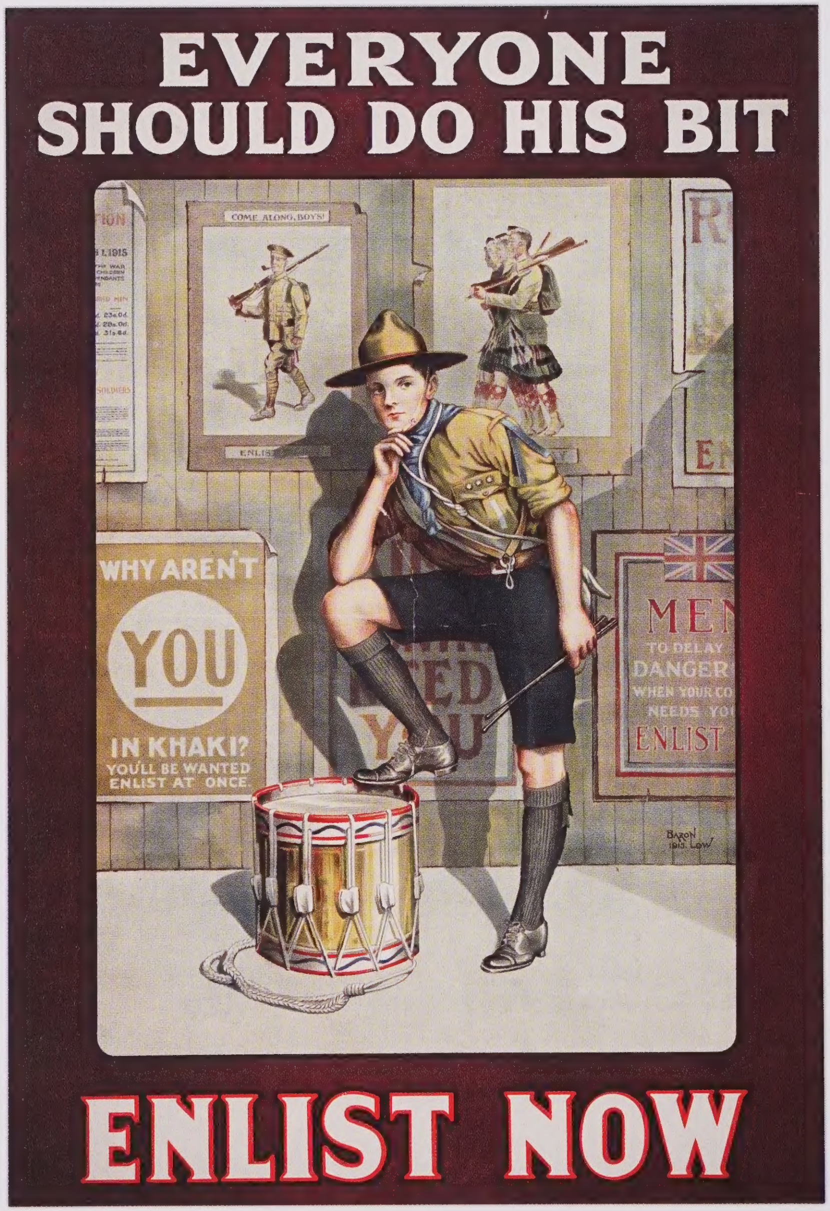
Comics and Graphic Novels

159. Pat Mills (1949-) and Joe Colquhoun (1926-1987). *Charley's War: 2 June 1916 – 1 August 1916.* London: Titan Books, 2004.

160. Pat Mills and Joe Colquhoun. *Charley's War: 1 August 1916 – 17 October 1916.* London: Titan Books, 2005.

161. Jacques Tardi (1946-). *It Was the War of the Trenches.* [Edited and translated by Kim Thompson]. Fourth edition. Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2011.

162. Max Brooks (1972-). *The Harlem Hellfighters.* Illustrated by Caanan White. New York: Broadway Books, 2014.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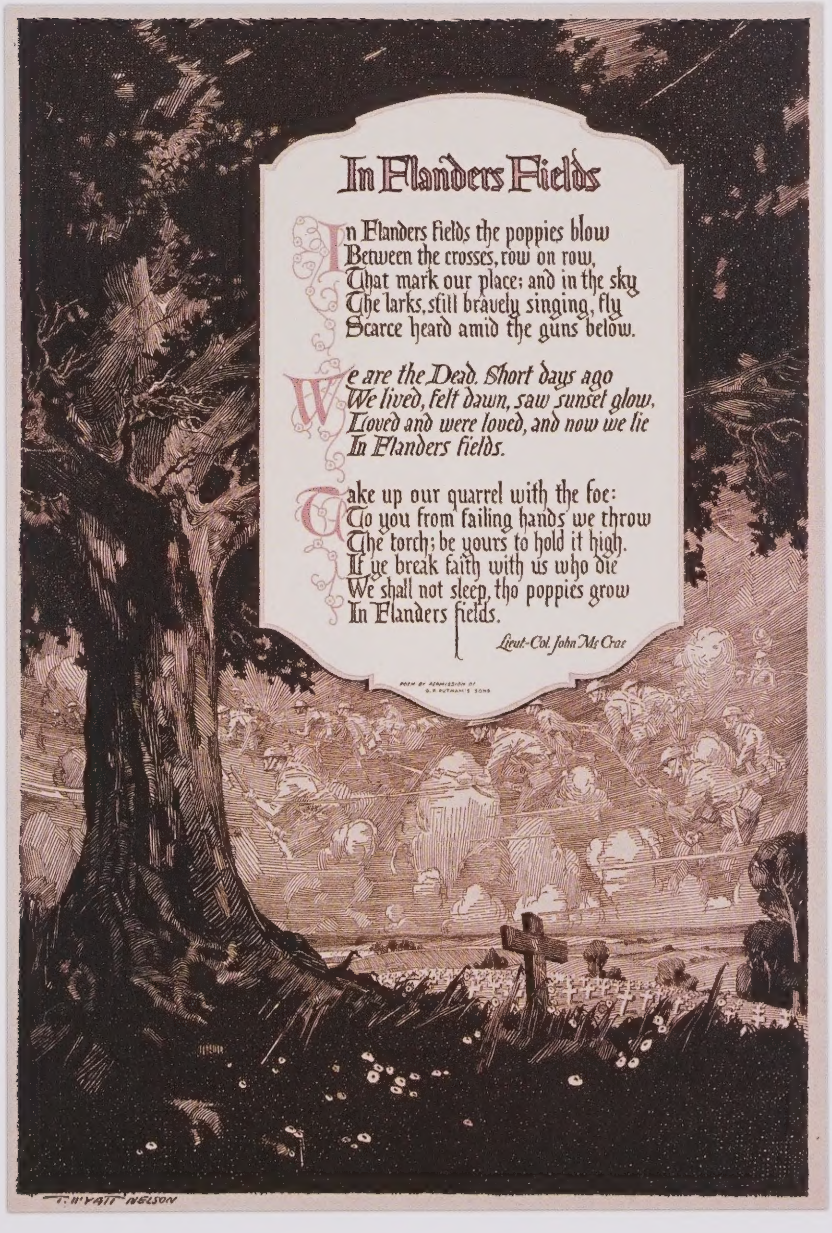


In Flanders Fields

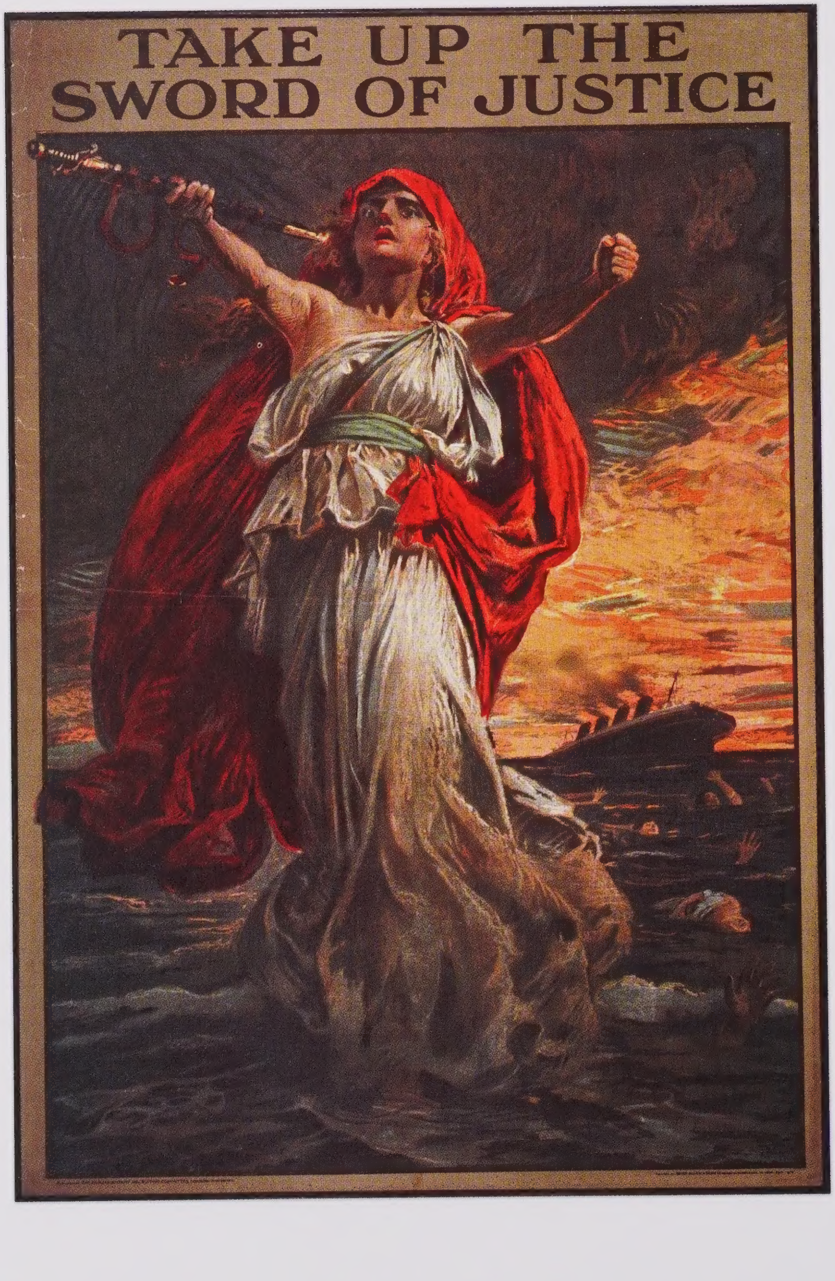
In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, tho poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Lieut.-Col. John McCrae

POEM BY PERMISSION OF
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS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